

Window on Jordan

By Farah Qassem
Star Staff Writer

Food is the spice of life. It is the thing that keeps you and me ticking around the clock, but you don't need me to tell you this piece of information. However, in today's hectic life, food has come to have an extra value-added quality. Eating has come to be a social act. People not only eat because it is necessary, but because it is the social thing to do. Inviting people for dinner, lunch, or even going out for a coffee, tea, ice cream or even *Kanfeh* has become part of our social make-up, a trait if you like of our society. Eating is a necessary part of our style of life.

We are a gregarious lot, and believe that our dietary habits are necessary for our social existence. Food and 'food behavior' are part of our social fabric, of our culture, and not only in Jordan, but all over the world. Food binds us together. Around the dining table people socialize, build up conversations, become friends and sign important deals. Housewives have their coffee rounds, men congregate around dinners or cafes, while young people begin to learn the importance of this social trait in their teens. And hence food, coffee, tea, Pepsi have come to have a social character; they are eaten and drunk

because they represent what sociologists term as social communication. It is believed that you subconsciously relate better when you have a cup of coffee or tea in your hand, indulge in small talk or make your point more effectively. You immediately offer a coffee to your visitor not necessarily because he wants it, but because it is the sociable, hospitable thing to do. There is no denying it, hot food and drink are part of our social manners. It is common courtesy to accept an invitation to tea, coffee or dinner. Refusing it would be very rude and against the

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The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

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اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Press and Publications Law creates a tiff between JPA and PPD

By Ibtisam Awadat
Star Staff Writer

THE PRESS and Publication Law of 1998 started its process of implementation on the wrong foot. The ad campaign recently launched in the print media by the Press and Publications Dept (PPD), urging newspapers to rectify their legal position, has once again come unstuck.

Till Wednesday, 18 November, just three daily newspapers—*Al Rai*, *Jordan Times* and *Arab Al Yom*—have put their papers in order. Meanwhile, PPD's Legal Affairs and License Director Abia-Ezzeh told *The Star* that as far as weeklies are concerned, only three have yet complied with the new law. The papers are *Al Majd*, *Al Hadath* and *Al Liwa*.

However Ezzeh added that weeklies such as *Al Fares*, *Al Bilad*, *Al Mithaq* and *Al Urdun* have already submitted documents concerning legal requirements for their chief editors. But she added eight other specialized publications had already rectified their position. "The period given to newspapers to meet with the conditions of the law ends on the last day of the current month," Iyad Qattan, PPD director-general told *The Star*.

But the process of legal implementation has already created a tiff between the Information Ministry and the PPD on one hand, and the Jordan Press Association (JPA) on the other over the interpretation of Article 13 of the new press law.

The controversial article states that "regardless of what is stipulated in other legislations, any publication must meet the following capital criteria before obtaining approval to issue." The article further states that daily newspapers must have a capital of JD 500,000, while non-dailies must put up a deposit of JD 100,000. However for specialized publications it is only JD 5,000.

"In our meeting with the JPA council and in the presence of Information Minister

Nasser Jindeh, we agreed to seek legal advice over the interpretation of this article," Qattan said. "We are yet waiting the legal opinion. However, I was really surprised with the statements that appeared in the press quoting the JPA secretary regarding the different interpretation of the article," he added.

But the JPA doesn't agree with the PPD. "We believe the required license is not a question in Article 13 particularly when it applies to current and standing newspapers," said Fakhri Abu Hamda, secretary of the JPA.

"The phrase 'when the publication submits its documents for approval to issue' applies only to new publications to be issued," Abu Hamda

pointed out. That's why the JPA are adamant about defending newspapers and those who work in them. "If any publication is to be closed following the implementation of Article 13, we will certainly take the case to court," Abu Hamda emphasized.

"However, we support the PPD concerning the conditions for chief editor, Abu Hamda maintained.

According to the law, the chief editor must be a full-time Jordanian resident who worked in journalism for a minimum of eight years, and must be a member of the JPA for at least three years.

"This debate is a legal subject that has to be settled, none of us can decide who holds the correct interpretation," said Mahmoud Al Sharif, chief editor of *Ad Dussour* daily.

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Maneuvers uphold Wye Accord implementation

By Star Staff Writer and combined news agencies

THE LONG-AWAITED implementation of the US-brokered peace deal between the Palestinians and Israel is expected to take place this week. It wasn't clear before last Tuesday whether the 'war of words' between Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would cool down.

But it ended when Netanyahu accepted President Arafat's retraction from the statements he made last Sunday, in which Arafat said that he will declare a Palestinian state by next May, no matter what it may cost. President Arafat added by saying that Palestinians could relocate their uprising if Israel strayed from the path of peace, and might resort to the use of arms to defend their rights in Jerusalem.

These comments prompted Netanyahu on Monday to suspend implementation of the peace agreement.

Raising the heat further, Israel's hard-line Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon called on Jewish settlers to grab as much land as they could to protect their settlements in the West Bank.

"Everyone should take action, should run, and should grab more hills. That's the way it will be, and that most

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A meteor streaks through the night sky in this time exposure image over Taitaka in Taiwan's Jade Mountain early 18 November. Scientists said the Leonid meteor storm is the most intense in 32 years. There are fears that the spectacular cosmic displays might pose threat to 600 commercial satellites orbiting the Earth that broadcast television shows. But consensus among the world's scientists is that Leonid meteor storm will have little effect on global communications systems. Reuters

Baghdad media stung by American ambitions

By Roula Khalaf

BAGHDAD—Iraq attacked US and UK leaders' suggestions that the regime of President Saddam Hussein should be overthrown, and promised that the Iraqi leader would last in office much longer than President Bill Clinton.

As United Nations weapons inspectors and relief workers arrived in Baghdad, ending a two-week crisis over arms inspections, newspaper editorials focused on US schemes to topple Mr Saddam.

Mr Saddam has long claimed that the US and UK aim to prolong United Nations sanctions imposed on Iraq since 1990 until Mr Saddam is removed from power.

A main reason for Iraq's decision to end cooperation with inspectors last month was its perception that the US continued to refuse to consider a lifting of the oil embargo, even if Iraq complied with requirements to destroy its weapons of mass destruction.

"The ugly American president has finally uncovered his real face and publicly revealed his plans to conspire against Iraq," said a government official writing in *Babil*, a newspaper which is owned by Mr Saddam's son, Uday.

"Clinton's remarks were irresponsible and represent a reckless US policy and a blatant violation of the UN charter which stipulates that sovereignty of states should be respected," said Khudair al Dulaimi, an information officer.

Referring to the Iraqi opposition, he said: "This shows that the US administration is being misled by some outlawed elements who claim to be Iraqi opposition but are in reality irresponsible people trying to earn their living in a cheap and cowardly way."

Iraq considers the opposition too fragmented to be a serious threat and dismisses its members as agents in the hands of the US Central Intelligence Agency.

At the UN headquarters in Baghdad, meanwhile, 86 UN arms inspectors arrived yesterday, to be followed by six more today.

The returning inspectors are charged with monitoring sites already investigated. Although the resumption of their work will be a first test of Iraqi commitment to resume cooperation, they will not conduct challenge inspections of the kind requested by the US when it accepted Iraq's reversal of its ban on arms inspectors.

A team that will conduct more difficult inspections has to be put together by Unseom in New York.

Financial Times Syndication

Prince Charles waits patiently for English throne

By Bill Gleaner

LONDON—At an age when many successful professionals are entrenched in positions of power, Britain's Prince Charles, who marks his 50th birthday Saturday, is still preparing for the job he was born to fill.

The man who would be king remains "the man in waiting," as the BBC called him, a prince forced to grow up in the limelight in an ever changing country.

The two essential facts of his life are these: his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, remains the sovereign, while he remains the heir. Elizabeth, 72, shows no sign of abdicating in favor of her son. Far from it. If she were to step on the throne for the rest of her life and live as long as her mother, Britain's beloved Queen Mum, now 98, then Charles would be at least 75 before he has a chance to take the throne. So, he waits. And Britain watches.

From great hope of a centuries-old monarchy to failed husband, ridiculed in a tabloid age, from dashing military man to pony landowner, Charles' public persona

has changed with the decades and events of his life. And yet, in the zigzag course of public popularity, Charles' fortunes appear to be on the upswing as he moves from the shadow cast by the life and death of his ex-wife, Princess Diana, killed 31 August, 1997, in a Paris car accident with her companion, Dodi Fayed.

The gentleman farmer who preached organic values long before they became fashionable may not have been so daft after all. The amateur architect who railed against modern buildings that threatened to blot the land like car-buncles seems like a prophet in an era of strip malls and boxy neighborhoods. And the wealthy heir who could have easily jumped on the Eurotrash merry-go-round

instead presides over a Prince's Trust charity that has helped create thousands of jobs for disadvantaged youths.

"There's an awful lot of fuss over this birthday," says Hugo Vickers, a royal historian. "On the whole, Charles has had a better year than he has had for a long time. People are quite interested in him now as

there is no Diana about." "He does carry a lot of the burdens of the world on his shoulders," Vickers adds. "That's his character. He really is quite thin-skinned."

It's not as if one runs for King, but the birthday has turned into a campaign of sorts, as Charles seeks public favor. Despite reams of stories, a few books and a couple of television documentaries timed for the birthday, the most revealing program of all was a 40-minute documentary produced by the British Broadcasting Corp. titled *Charles at 50*. The filmmakers received background briefings from Charles and his aides, as well as on-camera interviews with some of his closest friends.

And the documentary tackled the "Camilla problem," Charles' affair with Camilla Parker Bowles, who it is said is a "non-negotiable part of his life." According to the program, Charles and Camilla "spend on average two nights a week together." A royal aide has also been assigned the task of easing her into the public, which could take years.

But winning over the public may actually prove easier than winning over his mother.

The program quoted Buckingham Palace sources who said the Queen "has not

and will not meet with Camilla," and is against the couple marrying. The Queen won't even attend Charles' official birthday party Saturday, which is being given by Camilla. Instead, she'll give a celebration of her own Friday at Buckingham Palace.

Even more pointedly, Buckingham Palace sources indicated that Charles was not yet ready for the role of monarch. But, apparently, Charles is in no rush to become King, according to his close friend and former teacher, Eric Anderson, who told the BBC: "I don't think he'll mind very much if he stays on as Prince of Wales for a long time."

Charles was born 14 November, 1948. According to his great grandmother, Queen Mary, the infant Charles most resembled Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria, his great-great-grandmother.

The country Charles was born into was far different from today's Britain. His grandfather, King George VI, still ruled an empire, although it was already coming apart in the years after Britain nearly went bust while winning World War II. Charles

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World REPORT

05.11.1998

The Dead to the Red, and then to bed!



By John Fenn
Star Staff Writer

WITH THE whole of the Kingdom celebrating His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd birthday, it seemed as good a time as any to make a cycle trip from the Dead Sea to the Red Sea. Our arrival at Jordan's year round sea resort was timed to coincide with the national celebrations.

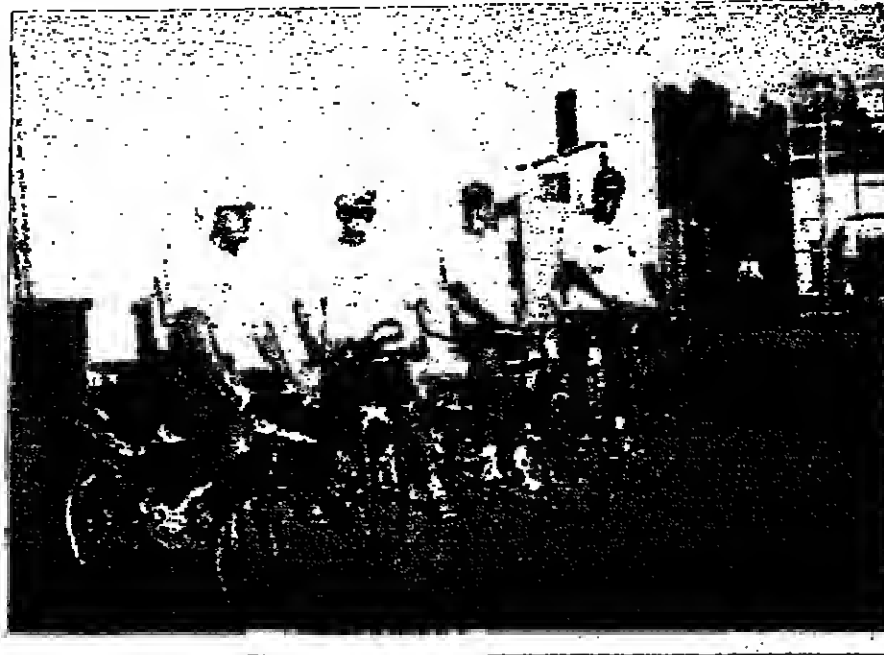
However, due to logistical problems, we had to settle for cycling the equivalent distance (250km), along the Dead Sea road. The fearless foursome were all members of the Jordan Rugby Football Club. Unfortunately, our 1pm departure time from Amman was delayed by two hours, because of some last minute preparations (one flat tyre and faulty gears).

By 3 o'clock on Thursday afternoon, the courageous cyclists left Amman to the roar of a three-man crowd (one of which was a bemused policeman on guard at the British Embassy). After five hours of cycling, the robust riders

crossed the Wadi Mujib Bridge (90km), and rendezvoused with the support team. The night was spent on the shore of the Dead Sea, with the stars and the moon for company.

At the crack of dawn, the admirable adventurers set off needing to cycle the final 160km of the designated distance. By 3 o'clock, we were 70 km away from Aqaba, but with only two hours of sunlight left. We were helped on in the final leg by some chasing dogs, and the last hour of the trip was navigated by torch light. Eventually, the perspiring peddlers free-wheeled into Aqaba city center, and were immediately engulfed by the mass celebrations in honor of King Hussein.

Our first stop was the Al Qasr hotel for a well-earned drink, although the bar stools were the last thing a certain part of our anatomy needed after 15 hours of cycling. After a hearty meal at the Ali Baba restaurant, it was straight to bed. Not even the largest and most spectacular fireworks display in Jordan could wake us up. ■



Prince Charles waits patiently for English throne

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would grow to oversee the loss of Britain's last major imperial possession, Hong Kong.

The British were also less questioning of authority in those days after World War II. The monarchy was secure. And the press did not pry into the private lives of the ruling class. In those days, royal offspring were carefully shielded and only rarely presented to the public.

He was sent off to school, dealing with the spartan life at Scotland's elite Gordonstoun, and then on to Cambridge, and a hitch in the Royal Navy.

Then, like all young princes, he got down to business—finding a suitable bride. His heart may have belonged to Camilla all those years, but it

was Diana who went up the aisle with him in the fairy tale royal wedding in 1981.

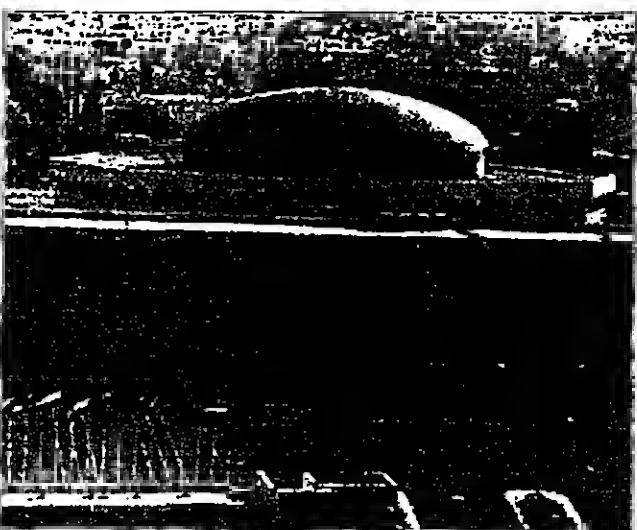
The marriage produced two heirs—Princes William and Harry—and miles of bad copy for the royal family. The relationship didn't disintegrate, it went up in tabloid flames, imperiling the monarchy, as both sides fought a public relations war of attrition. Then came the publication of the infamous Camillagate tapes, steamy phone conversations between Charles and Camilla surreptitiously recorded by a party still unidentified. The love-sick prince was revealed as a cad, if not an outright fool. He finally admitted to adultery during a televised interview in 1994, two years before the divorce became final. It was Diana's death that

seemed to bring out another side of Charles. He apparently fought with the Queen and her courtiers to make sure he could bring Diana's body back to Britain with full honors.

"One can only imagine what his thoughts must have been as he sat beside Diana's body in the hospital, but his emotion was clear for all to see in the television pictures which followed," royal biographer Sarah Bradford wrote recently in the *Times* of London. "For all the hysteria in the succeeding days, the image which he presented was deeply moving." She added, "From that traumatic day, public sympathy has been swinging back toward the Prince." ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Parliament meets for constitutional session



AMMAN (Star)—A Royal decree was issued last Sunday to summon Parliament to a constitutional session today, Thursday 19 November. The decree was issued by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent. The brief session is in line with the constitutional requirements in relation to the absence of His Majesty King Hussein.

Paragraph 9 article 28 of the Constitution stipulates that "If the King's absence from the country extends for more than four months

while the National Assembly is not in session, the Parliament has the right to reconvene and discuss the matter."

The session will begin with a statement delivered by Prime Minister Fayez Al Tarawneh to Parliament that is to be presided by the Speaker of the Senate, Zeid Al Rifai.

"The council will convene on Thursday to implement a constitutional requirement," Speaker of the Lower House, Saad Hayel Srour was quoted as saying. ■

The social side of food!

Continued from page 1

social mores of society. In time, if you keep doing it, you could be branded as a recluse and made into a social outcast. That's why society may also frown on people who follow strict diets. This is because they prevent themselves from indulging in lavish meals.

You go to a cafe or a restaurant not because you are hungry or thirsty, but because you want to be with someone or with a group of people. This is simply because it is the place where you can relax, pour out your friendliness,

and emotions. Somehow, you leave behind the ideological baggage of propriety at home, and become the gregarious, fun loving person.

Going out with a friend could be good for the soul so to speak. An ordinary cafe might be just the place to frustrate your anger; it can have a sedative value because it relaxes and brings you out to new surroundings.

All in all, and contrary to what people may think, food does have a strong social side. Furthermore, it is permanent. The taster it is, the more enjoyable the gathering is likely to be. ■

Haider Murad retains the lead in Amman Chamber of Commerce

AMMAN (Star)—Haider

Murad, the current president of the Amman Chamber of Commerce, retained his seat at the ACC elections held last week. The 12-hour election, which took place on 17 November, was a

heated competition between two main blocs: Al Tarawneh and Al Wifaq.

Al Tarawneh, who heads Al Wifaq, retained his presidency with 4601 votes. Riyadh Saif, of Al Wifaq came second with 4245 votes. About 7690 voters out of 30,000 traders and businessmen participated in the elections.

Amman Governor Tal'at Al Nawayseh, declared the results hours after the closing of the ballot boxes. The two blocs shared the 12 seats of the Chamber. The latest elections, the 21st in the ACC



Murad

history, are the last this century. Next elections will take place in the year 2002. ■

Press and Publications Law creates debate between JPA and PPD

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"Although I hope the JPA is defending the right interpretation, however newspapers should rectify their position," Sharif, a former Information Minister added.

He said that newspapers who don't rectify their legal status will suffer the consequences. Mr Sharif pointed out that the required capital is an interference in freedom of expression.

"The old mentality behind this law is not accepted, when you impose a fixed capital you are obviously interfering in these newspapers," Sharif explained.

The daily and weekly news-

papers who have already put their house in order according to Article 13 of the law could have waited for the legal interpretation, but they have not.

"It's a lesson we learnt from the previous Temporary Press and Publication law of 1997, which was rejected by the courts as unconstitutional, when our paper together with 12 others were closed," said Fahd Rimawi, editor in chief of *Al Majd* newspaper.

"I've been in the business since 1969. I am one of the JPA founders," Rimawi said in relation to the conditions of editor in chief in the new press law. However Mr Rimawi said that after considerable difficulty, they managed to collect the

money through their assets and through bank loans.

Meanwhile, news about the closure of *Akhar Al Isbat*, two weeks ago, quickly spread. Nobody knows the reason for this. "We rectified our position three years ago and we don't have any legal problems concerning the implementation of the law," Ali Al Nayef, general director of the newspaper told *The Star*.

However, and "through our move to close the newspaper we faced a severe campaign from the press, but our motives will be announced next week," Nayef, who claimed that his paper is the oldest in the Kingdom that began in 1957, con-

Maneuvers uphold Wye Accord implementation

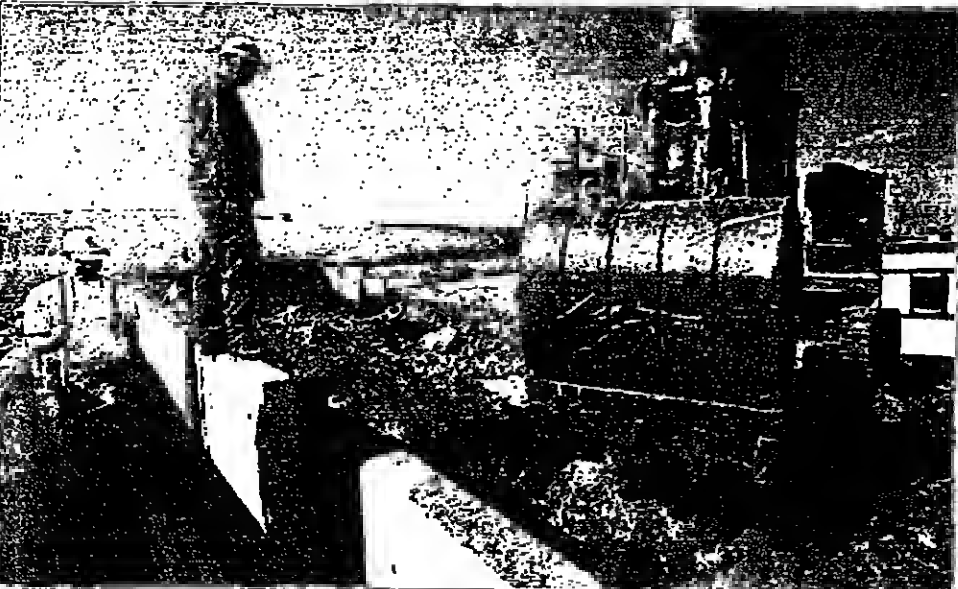
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be done now," Sharon said. The hawkish Sharon also sent out some mixed signals by saying that, "A small-scale Palestinian state might not be the worst scenario for Israel."

The US Administration, however, responded harshly on the two accounts. The State Department spokesman, James Rubin, said that, "Arafat was wrong to declare 'our rifle is ready to defend Jerusalem', rather than showing commitment to the peace course." Rubin also criticized Sharon with equal fervor, saying that his statements serve to undermine the trust and confidence established between the two sides in the peace process.

President Arafat's repeal came on Tuesday morning, by saying that he is committed to pursue peaceful methods in resolving any problems concerning the final-status negotiations. The Palestinian President assured that he will join amicably the next phase of negotiations.

On his part, Netanyahu called the statement a positive step, which encourages the Israeli government to convene today, 19 November, and decide when to carry out the next steps. The session was postponed a day to give Palestinians time to submit their guarantees of publishing an anti-incitement law and declaring a plan to collect illegal weapons. Both elements are contained in the Wye agreement but not scheduled to be completed until one week after the Israeli troops begin their redeployment.



Israeli soldiers build concrete fortifications on the outskirts of this West Bank Jewish enclave 18 November. The Israeli parliament last night endorsed the Wye peace agreement which will hand over an additional 13 percent of the West Bank to Palestinian self-rule and leave a number of Jewish settlements isolated. dps/Photo by David Silverman Reuters

Later on Tuesday, the Israeli Knesset finally ratified the Wye accords after two days of yelling and exchanging insults. Five of Netanyahu's cabinet ministers didn't attend the voting, which passed with a majority of 75 to 19 in the 120-member Knesset.

The opposition Labor Party and most of the left-wing members extended their support to the agreement, stating that it didn't mean that they support the government. Dan Tichon, the Likud-member Knesset chairman, called the ratification "the hardest decision the Knesset has been

asked to make in 50 years." Speaking at the session, both Netanyahu and his Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai defended the latest accords as one that minimizes damages to Israeli interests. "I don't believe there is any other way to peace with our neighbors and I do not know of any other way to make peace at all," said Netanyahu at the end of the debate.

The timetable now seems uncertain. The withdrawal of Israeli troops from an initial two percent of the West Bank area, the opening of the Palestinian airport and Israel's commitment to free 250 Pal-

eststinian prisoners is still unclear. Israel continues to urge the Palestinians to comply with its call to arrest one-third of the Palestinian fugitives by 20 November.

Many peace followers believe that the Wye accords implementation is inevitable since it managed to survive the Jerusalem bombings and the latest tension between the Palestinian Authority and Israel. But despite the controversy and the fuss surrounding the Wye Plantation accord, the truth is that the hardest part of the deal is yet to start. ■



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For the Record

Egyptian Minister arrives in Amman

AMMAN (Star)—Egyptian Minister of Higher Education Mafed Shehab arrived in Amman Tuesday, 17 November, to participate in the meetings of the Committee of the Arab Youth Ministers, which were held Wednesday. The Committee was formed by the Council of Arab Youth Ministers to get acquainted with Jordan's preparations to host the 90th Arab Sports Round, expected to take place next year.

Jordan wins body building title

AMMAN (Star)—Jordan's body building champion Mustafa Hassanein won the 52nd World Championship which was held in the Turkish city of Izmir. Seventy-two form around the globe participated in the international event. Hassanein, who arrived in Amman Tuesday, said he dedicated his victory to His Majesty King Hussein on his 63rd birthday. He wished the King complete recovery and a safe return home. Meanwhile, the International Body Building Federation (IBBF) elected last Sunday Abdul Mun'em Abu Touq, the President of the Jordan Body Building Federation, as Deputy Chairman of the IBBF's Middle East area for the next four years.

Expansion of the Qualified Industrial Zone

AMMAN (Star)—Minister of Industry and Trade Mohammed Saleh Hourani announced that an agreement has been reached to expand the Qualified Industrial Zone (QIZ) between Jordan and Israel at Al Hassana Industrial City in Irbid. It was agreed to establish a new industrial zone between the two countries.

In a statement to Jordan News Agency, the minister said that the issue of facilitating the flow of Jordanian exports to Israel, which is controlled by the Palestinian National Authority through border crossings and bridges, was discussed during the recent visit of the US Secretary of Commerce to Jordan and Israel. Mr Hourani pointed out that a trilateral Jordanian-Palestinian-Israeli meeting for the Standards and Specification Departments will be held next week to discuss means to remove obstacles facing the flow of Jordanian exports to the PNA area.

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Regent receives German President

AMMAN (Petra)—His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, stressed the European role to back the Middle East peace efforts referring to particular to Germany's role during its upcoming presidency of the European Union which could help realize a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region.

Speaking at a joint press conference with German President Roman Herzog, Prince Hassan voiced deep appreciation for the German government's continued assistance to Jordan, out of particular to swapping Jordan's debts to Germany.

"I would like to refer to the continued assistance in technical, economic and scientific areas which we receive from the German government," Prince Hassan said.

"In the name of His Majesty King Hussein, I would like to welcome a dear guest and close friend to His Majesty and to Jordan," Prince Hassan said, expressing hope for closer cooperation between the two countries in the years to come.

Prince Hassan said the European role to contribute to peace efforts in the region has been clearly demonstrated during the recent visit by Austrian Foreign Minister to the region. "The German role can be conceived through the German President's remarks, who he referred to the early beginnings of Euro-Mid cooperation in the 1960s," Prince Hassan said.

"This visit is extremely important at this particular time ahead of Germany's presidency of the European group," the Regent said.

Prince Hassan referred to the new government in Germany which, he said, would stick to the same pattern of foreign policy particularly in terms of its support to peace and stability in the Middle East region.

In reply to a question regarding the obstacles impeding peace efforts in the region, the Regent urged all parties to work together inspired by His Majesty King Hussein's distinctive efforts and his effective role in the Wye River Agreement between the Palestinians and Israel.

"To the spirit of His Majesty's participation in the Wye River concluding ceremony and indeed in terms of his courageous contribution, which we all witnessed, we will do everything that we can to ensure, effectively, that the agreement will be honoured and of course, that does mean the commitment of the parties," Prince Hassan said.

Prince Hassan said there will be difficulties facing the implementation of the agreement in the early days, but the implementation program will be effectively recognized.

"Obviously there will be difficulties in the early days," the Regent said.

"The difficulties of the moment are important, but I think as I speak there is every possibility that the timetable and the implementation programme will be recognized and will be honoured," Prince Hassan told reporters.

The Regent said he believes there is a deep commitment on both sides to implement the agreement.

"I do hope effectively that the coming weeks will not be weeks in which every single statement made by either side will be regarded as an impediment in terms of implementation," Prince Hassan said.

"I recognize that it is difficult to ask of the parties given the fact that domestic politics play such an important role, but on the one hand I am deeply convinced, having had the privilege of receiving visitors from both sides, Palestinians and Israelis, that there is a deep commitment to the implementation and on the other side, I think, the realities, a war weary region can not afford greater delays and can not afford to invite a vacuum after so much has been achieved," Prince Hassan said.

For his part, the German President voiced his deep appreciation for the invitation to visit Jordan and the warm hospitality accorded to him and his delegation. He said he was pleased to hold candid talks with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan. "It was not a surprise that the talks focused on assessing the Middle East peace process following the significant conclusion in Wye," President Herzog said.

He added that Germany is always pleased to discuss developments in the Middle East with His Majesty King Hussein and HRH Prince Hassan. "Today we discussed what can be achieved in this region and the world. When peace is realized we will try to crystallize some ideas on scopes of international cooperation to benefit of the peoples in this region," he added.

"We discussed this in the context of the European model and we have to think about the future of this cooperation from now," President Herzog said. He highly appreciated Jordan's key role to strengthen peace and stability in the region.

President Herzog is leaving Jordan, Thursday, after an official visit that began last Tuesday.

He opened a wastewater treatment plant in Irbid and was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Science and Technology. Mrs Herzog also visited the Baga'a Camp. Before he flies later today, the German President is due to visit Petra and Aqaba.

By Star Staff Writer

IT WAS a national celebration, with thousands of Jordanians taking to the streets to honour His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd birthday. Everybody had their own unique way of expressing their love and loyalty to their leader.

Just two days before the big event, Amman had turned into a beehive, with workers everywhere hussily making the final preparations to the city. Banners and flags were hung, and students made their final rehearsals for the official ceremony at Sports City. Offices displayed giant pictures of King Hussein, and all the streets had neon-lit messages of love to the King.

The big day began with a decorated motorcade, cars and lorries had been painstakingly covered with flags, pictures and flowers. The procession set off from the City Hall, in Ras Al Ein, and made its way all over the capital. Intensive efforts were obviously made by the Greater Amman Municipality, and final touches were made to Al Urdun Street so as to ensure that the official opening coincided with the King's birthday.

The morning saw Amman covered in banners, raised over streets and on buildings. Every house in Jordan seemed to express the message of happiness and joy. Prayers were made to God, to safeguard our beloved leader, and to speed up his recovery from the chemotherapy treatment at the Mayo Clinic.

The King was keen to communicate with his people, and a live broadcast went out on Jordanian Television. The King reassured everyone watching that he was responding well to the treatment, and that he was looking forward to returning home soon.

The main festival at Sports City, held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, was also broadcast live. Thousands attended the ceremony. Love and warm feelings characterized the speech delivered by the Regent, and every sentence was greeted with enthusiastic roars from the crowd. The Regent highlighted the role that the King has played since the declaration of the Kingdom, and reiterated his love towards the people of Jordan.

After the speech, there were performances by students, Jordanian national folklore groups, and by dabka groups. In addition, the aerobic display team (the Royal Jordanian Falcons) thrilled the crowds, and helicopters hovered overhead carrying Jordanian flags and the Royal Crown.

The whole of the Kingdom took part in the celebrations;

meo and women side by side in the streets of Jordan, gathered for the single purpose of showing their appreciation for His Majesty.

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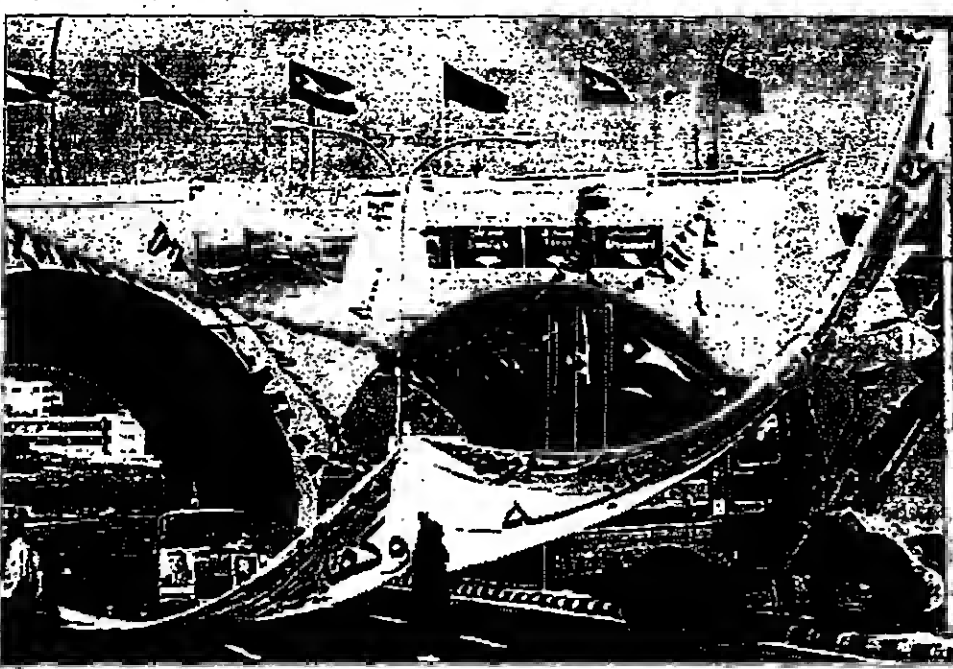
Celebrating the King's birthday



Prince Hassan at Sports City

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Prime Minister Tarawneh by Amman Mayor Nidal Hadeed



Amman celebrates King Hussein's birthday



A scene from the festivities

Inter-faith Council stresses more understanding between religions

By Taha Abu Taha
Special to The Star

DEPUTIZING FOR His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Chairman of the Royal Academy, Dr. Nasser El Din El Assad, president of the Royal Academy (Al Akademiyya) opened the Muslim-Christian conference which took place in Amman last week. The venue, held under the title of "Muslims and Christians in modern societies, the images of the other and the meaning of co-citizenship" was jointly organized by the Royal Academy and the Orthodox Center. Fifty-seven Muslim and Christian scholars from 18 countries took part in the event. It is the ninth council to be held by the Royal Academy and the Orthodox Center.

Prince Hassan hosted a lunch at Bassam Palace for participants, and participated in the last working session. During the seven working sessions, six papers were presented. They focused on a number of topics from a Muslim and a Christian point of view. Presentation and discussions that followed were held in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect.

The venue agreed that one of the major problems facing Muslims and Christians is related to how each faith views the other and its inaccurate knowledge of each other's religion. Real knowledge of the other's religion is limited to a small minority on both sides.

The forum also saw that the history of the church and particularly the Eastern Church portray how Christians learnt to live side by side with different religions. It also showed that the Eastern church respected the cultural identity and language of other faiths

while western crusaders and colonial wars were a direct cause of damaging the image of western Christianity in the Arab and Muslim world.

The Council recommended that Muslims and Christians should go back to the original source of both faiths. This will come to prove to the world the openness and flexibility of Islam, and the tolerance and respect of the Christian faith. It suggested that members of both faiths should respect each other and work together with persistence and determination to prevent the exploitation of religion to prevent hate and separatism.

Citizenship to modern society was another issue discussed. Attendees called for further mutual Islamic-Christian to broaden greater understanding across the globe.

The Council explained that the unity of the mind in human beings is the basis for modern democracy and Shura which enhances the concept of co-citizenship that is clearly elaborated in the Holy Books.

The Council concluded that the experiments that were successfully implemented in Muslim and Christian countries aiming at introducing each faith to the other in an objective and academic manner, should be repeated in other countries. Scholars suggested that genuine co-citizenship in communities where either faith constitutes a minority, requires a certain degree of sensitivity on both sides towards the traditions, values and anxieties of the other. The Council suggested more sensitivity from each faith towards the other to prevent unacceptance and hostility

Before adjourning, participants expressed their gratitude to Prince Hassan for his patronage and for participating in the Council's working sessions.

President of the Orthodox Center in Switzerland Metro-

politian Damaskinos extended an invitation to host the next Council once a date is set by the its Coordination Committee. The Committee includes members of the Royal Academy and the Orthodox Centre.

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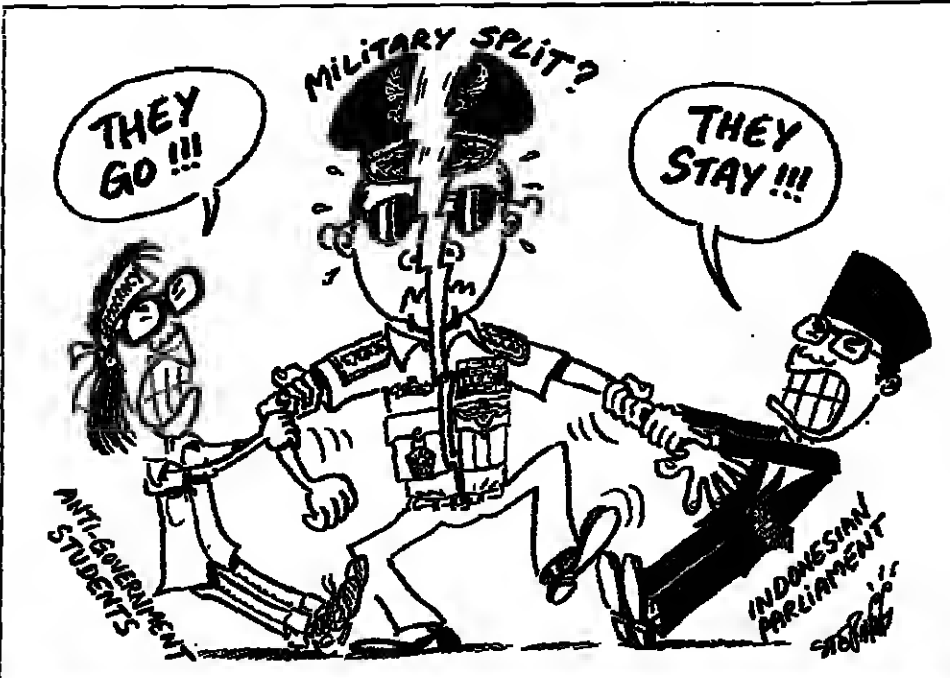
Starting 22nd November, Royal Wings fly Amman-Haifa-Amman on Sundays and Wednesdays.

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Our Say...

Why Wye has to work

A MINI crisis that threatened to derail the celebrated Wye Mills agreement, signed in Washington last month, was quickly contained this week. The crisis, caused by earlier statements made by Palestinian President Arafat in which he hinted at the use of armed struggle to regain Palestinian rights in Jerusalem and promised to declare a Palestinian state in May next year, was averted after US intervention and high-level Palestinian-Israeli contacts.

The Wye deal will be voted on in the Israeli cabinet on Thursday and if approved the first of Israel's pullbacks will take place within days. Much has been said about the Wye agreement—not all favorable. The latest accord has its critics on both sides of the Palestinian-Israeli divide and that is why both Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have been making hawkish statements to appease critics of the agreement. Arafat's statements that the Palestinians will entertain armed struggle if negotiations over Jerusalem and the final status fail to secure Palestinian rights seem a bit far fetched but should be taken in light of the PNA's wide crackdown against Hamas and Palestinian militants. In the end it is PNA's actions that matter to Israel not Arafat's celebratory statements about declaring a Palestinian state come next year.

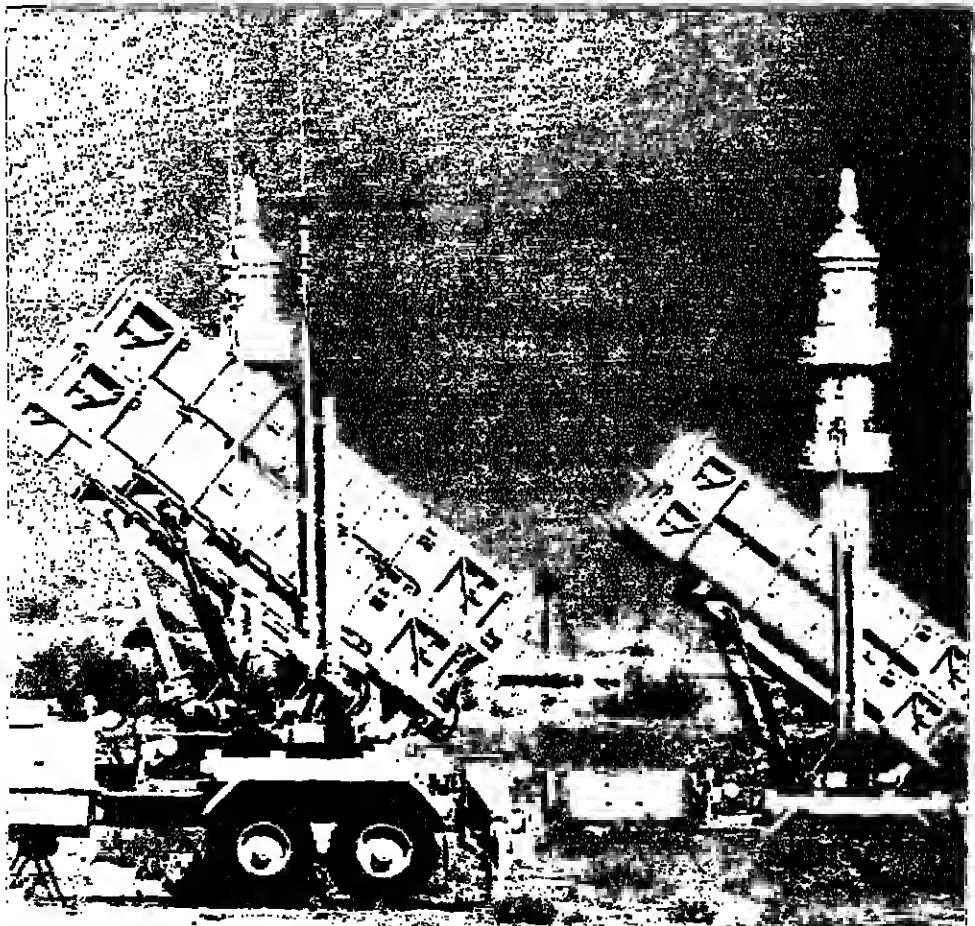
Netanyahu's actions and statements, on the other hand, are less contradictory. His statements, directed to right wing radicals, were no different from Arafat's bellicose. The only difference is that while the PNA was rounding up Hamas activists and hushing up critics against the Wye deal, Netanyahu was giving the go-ahead to begin work on the first phase of housing units at Jabal Abu Ghneim near Jerusalem.

The US has sent its special envoy Dennis Ross to the region to make sure that both parties live up to their commitments. Without US pestering, the Wye deal is likely to be run down just like its predecessors.

But with or without US auspices, both parties are realizing that it is in their interest to make Wye work—even if partially. Netanyahu is confronted by the fact that an overwhelming majority of Israelis back a deal with the Palestinians. Arafat knows that without tangible feedbacks such as further Israeli pullbacks or the opening of the Gaza airport, he runs the risk of losing his grip over Palestinian affairs.

As for the United States and for President Clinton in particular, the Wye deal cannot but work since the president's credibility and stature have been pinned to its success.

So while the large picture may still look gray and unencouraging, the smaller one may be about to change. Wye will work regardless of what Arafat and Netanyahu say or do because both have a stake in its survival—and theirs. Wye will continue to have its critics, especially among the Palestinians, but again they don't seem to have many options left.



A US Patriot missile battery on permanent display seen next to a Kuwait city mosque 17 November. Kuwaiti and US Patriot missile batteries were placed at several strategic sites in the tiny state since Iraqi troops were evicted from Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf War. A team of UN weapons inspectors arrived in Baghdad to test Iraq's offer of renewed cooperation.

Reuters

Think of Iraqis, not Saddam

By James J. Zogby

THE ARAB world is weary from the on-again off-again confrontation with Iraq.

Seven long years of economic sanctions have resulted in terrible hardships for the people of Iraq. A once-prosperous people, Iraqis are today reduced to near-primitive living standards. Who can make sense of the mind-numbing infant mortality and child starvation rates reported annually by the United Nations?

Profound agony for the people, however, collides with a deep antipathy for the ruthless gang ruling the country. Their crimes are legendary and their unique brand of confrontation-politics has become infuriating.

Eye on Jordan

THE MUSLIM Brotherhood are always in the news. Hardly a week passes without their name being mentioned in the dailies. And this is good news indeed since the Islamic movement is part and parcel of the national political structure of the country.

The latest decision of the Muslim Brotherhood to fight the local elections that are going to be held next summer is seen as a further proof that the Islamists, once again, want to join the political life of the country.

Islamists, namely the Brotherhood and the Islamic Action Front have made a complete 180-degree U-turn when they opted out of fighting the 1997 November elections.

Will they be now making another 180-degree U-turn and opting in the political process? Further, is the U-turn to be made in a backward position or is it to move progressively forward?

Lips are sealed. Nobody—either Islamist politicians nor independent political observers—would dare venture what the next move is. Indeed it is argued that venturing into an exercise of political machinations is a dangerous business, particularly when it is realized that the Islamists have been beset recently by in-fighting and outright splits.

The recent resignations of deputies Dr. Abdullah Al Akalish and Mohammad Al Azzi-deh and previously now Minister of Administrative Development Bassam Al Omoush, may be testimony to the state of being in the movement?

But not so, as many Islamic politicians argue. The movement is strong, and differences in opinion does not mean schism. On the contrary, it is healthy.

And this brings us back to where we started. The participation of the Muslim Brotherhood and its political arm, the IAF into the political life of the country.

Despite the fact that a large number of hawkish dominate the Executive Council of the Muslim Brotherhood, the forward looking trend seems to be to rejoin the political life of the Kingdom.

Islamists have long argued that there grass-root support is strong and irrefragable. The fight for the local elections next year will draw on this support. For them it is a demonstration that they are still very much a force to be reckoned one.

Being what they are, Islamists wouldn't stay in the political wilderness for much longer.

Arab leaders are stuck in a no-win situation. Their fear of the Iraqi regime's potential for mischief is balanced by their concern for the suffering of Iraq's people. What confounds this exasperation of the Arab world leaders is the ability of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to periodically jerk the United States into potentially devastating and destabilizing confrontations.

US mobilization to confront the Iraqi refusal to comply with UN weapons inspections has become a seasonal affair. Every six months or so, Iraq balks, US officials rush to Arab capitals to solicit support, the United States rushes weapons and troops into the region and the entire area holds its collective breath, hoping to find a way to prevent hostilities that are only seen to aggravate anti-US sentiment and the suffering of the people of Iraq. And then at a last moment—at least in past confrontations—the Iraqi regime bends to the will of the United States and the crisis subsides.

Even more wearying than the human suffering and the penchant of the Iraqis for brinkmanship is the apparent pointlessness of it all. Arabs understand the danger of the Iraqi regime, but they have yet to see any coherent strategy to change that reality. Arab leaders ask whether a US bombing of Baghdad for a week or more would bring Saddam Hussein into line or whether such massive destruction resulting from these attacks would only create more hardship for Iraq's people while



at the same time inciting Arab public opinion.

In the nearly seven years since the end of the Gulf War, the United States, undoubtedly the world's only remaining superpower, has failed to project a clear plan to make positive changes in Iraq. Not only that, but the United States' exceptional leniency toward Iraq's violations of international law and human rights have provoked Arab-wide charges of a US double standard. This has undermined the United States' credibility in the Arab world.

So it is that in the face of this quandary and weariness that eight Arab states, the six Gulf Cooperation Council countries and Egypt and Syria) on Thursday issued a declaration in which they stated their strong preference for a negotiated settlement to this dangerous crisis.

At the same time, they made clear to the Iraqi leadership that should hostilities occur, it would be Baghdad's fault since it has refused to comply with UN weapons inspections.

This statement, while clearly unsympathetic to the posturing of the Iraqi regime, can hardly be construed as a ringing endorsement for the US position. The statement rather reflects the weariness and wariness of Arab leaders to this most frustrating of circumstances.

So far, so good. But Iraqi civilian casualties and massive destruction to the country's infrastructure from a bombing attack would most probably cause an anti-US backlash in Arab public opinion. At that point, all bets are off.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Sheer nerve and profiteering

The World's Banker: The History Of The House Of Rothschild, by Niall Ferguson, Weidenfeld & Nicolson £30, pp500

Reviewed by Peter Martin

THE SECRET of banking success, said an investor recently, is to combine long periods of prudence with brief but ruthless exploitation of opportunity. The Rothschilds illustrate this maxim perfectly. In their case, however, the phases of inspired financial savagery were compressed into a couple of decades, between 1810 and 1830.

After that, the House of Rothschild settled for bankerly prudence, and ultimately for prosperous decline. A history of the bank's two centuries of existence must cope with this gentle downward curve. It is a tribute to Niall Ferguson's skill that this inevitable reality is held at bay for most of the thousand pages of narrative.

Throughout the 19th century the Rothschilds' resources and cross-border reach placed them at the center of international affairs, and gave them unique competitive advantages.

The book draws on the private letters of the family, many revealed for the first time, and provides a vivid portrait of the two key figures of the bank's glory years, Nathan Rothschild in London, and his younger brother James, in Paris.

It was Nathan, who was largely responsible for propelling the five brothers into unprecedented wealth. He was sent by his father originally a mail-order salesman of antique coins from the Frankfurt ghetto to Manchester in 1798 or so. Starting in textiles, he soon found a more lucrative role in beating the Napoleonic War's

bans on trade with the continent. By 1811, he was running a banking business in London, ready to take on the role of channelling government funds to Britain's allies and Wellington's armies.

Ferguson says: "Historians have never adequately explained how an obscure Jewish merchant banker who only a few years before had been a smuggler, and a few years before that a minor textiles exporter was able to become the principal conduit of money from the British government to the continental battlefields on which the fate of Europe was decided in 1814 and 1815."

But, given the gaps in the records, his own account is also inevitably incomplete. Bribery appears to have played a part in getting the mandate; the smuggling network helped fulfil it. Most important appears to have been sheer nerve in setting up a clandestine funds transfer system, in keeping commission charges to a minimum, in recklessly extending credit to bridge the gap between dispatching funds and receiving settlement, in rigging the sterling exchange rate, in profiting from the opportunities for arbitrage that this presented.

Nathan's second triumph came after the war. Whatever myth may say, the sudden defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo did not, on Ferguson's evidence, provide Nathan with the opportunity for a financial coup. estate appears to have been worth roughly 1 percent of French GDP, a scale of affluence perhaps twice that of Bill Gates's today. And James was only one of the Rothschilds.

Indeed, if anything, 1815 was a difficult year for the bank. But by riding the post-war boom in UK government bonds to its peak, Nathan was able to multiply the firm's assets manifold. This capital strength and the multinational nature of the partnership allowed the government bond issuance. There was scope not merely for lucrative underwriting commissions, but also for manipulation of the accompanying fluctuations in currencies and interest rates.

Between 1815 and 1828, Ferguson calculates, the combined capital of the Rothschild houses in Frankfurt and London rose from £500,000 to over £4.3m. In the same period the capital of Baring Brothers, their closest rival, went from roughly £375,000 to £310,000.

Such breathtaking figures recur throughout the Rothschilds' heroic period. When Nathan's youngest brother James de Rothschild, based in Paris, died in 1868, his

estate appears to have been worth roughly 1 percent of French GDP, a scale of affluence perhaps twice that of Bill Gates's today. And James was only one of the Rothschilds.

The scale of the Rothschilds' wealth made them, in the eyes of the German writer Heinrich Heine, who knew James well, implicitly a revolutionary force. Though James lent money to reactionary regimes and thus helped shore them up he was "ultimately a powerful destroyer of patrimonial privilege, and the founder of a new democracy."

By inventing the modern international market for government bonds, Rothschild substituted financial assets for landed property. Heine's account has James arguing that the holders of these assets, no matter how powerful, could never be as enduringly repressive as the old aristocracy, because money was inevitably more impermanent than land. "One can gladly forgive the impermanence of the new nobility," Heine said, "in consideration of its ephemerality. In the twinkling of an eye, it will dissolve and evaporate."

Financial Times Syndication

Middle East Beat by Khairi Janbek Baghdad Saga!

ONCE AGAIN, in a new episode of the Iraq versus the UN saga, the world holds its breath awaiting an outcome to the chess game. Invariably, public criticism is directed to one side or the other, with the overwhelming question being why did Iraq defy the international will, and then back down immediately?

And why does the UN continue with its embargo and punitive sanctions when it is becoming all too evident that Iraq cannot feed itself, let alone work on weapons of mass destruction?

It is legitimate to seek answers to such questions because the turmoil and uproar that accompany every act of defiance affects the lives of millions across the globe, not just our Iraqi brethren, but everyone around the region.

From the perspective of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, it's not a question of cat and mouse game, trying to present the USA and its closest allies as a giant with many testicles, but with clay feet. There is a continued Iraqi attempt to show the UN as an appendage of US foreign policy through UNSCOM. With variable results, they seem to be successful at least in portraying the inability of the US administration to move without gaining support from the region.

Iraq is very much aware of the legacy of empires, and it knows full well that the USA is not an empire. It hasn't the will or the mentality of an empire. Otherwise, US troops would have walked straight into Baghdad. From this dimension, and since Iraq is no match to American fire-power, the only policy available is to keep taunting US foreign policy-makers until they commit a mistake that may result in an advantage for Iraq.

US allies in the region and internationally, do not seem to be set on the same determined path as the Americans, for obvious commercial reasons. Each time the US transports troops and logistical support for a possible attack, the bill becomes expensive, and forces some of the Iraqi neighbors to pay, or generously contribute to it.

This scenario has become tiresome for the US with "cry wolf" echoes in the background. It is expensive for the neighbors of Iraq as well, who have kept contributing in order to keep a potential threat at bay. Even the Security Council is not unanimous in its view.

President Saddam seems to be trying to provoke the clay footed giant, and he seems to have all the time in the world. His internal repressive machinery is as effective as ever, and the suffering Iraqi population is too busy trying to stay alive. When the UN and the USA talk about destroying Iraqi capabilities of manufacturing weapons of mass destruction, we seem to constantly misunderstand the meaning of the term. The issue is not an emotional subject; it's not whether a few missiles have been found here and there, or whether there are chemical heads, it's more complicated than that. Far more serious research needs to be done, if the objective is really to stop Iraq from manufacturing such weapons.

It seems that UNSCOM is busy pursuing records and papers of research, and personalities that have been involved or helped Iraq in its industrial war machinery, and companies and firms that have assisted the creation of the Iraqi military-industrial complex. It is such records that are being chased stubbornly and not the industrial capacity of Iraq, nor the missiles being hidden all over the country.

Business scene

■ The Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company has increased its reserve of the crude oil, gasoline, and other oil derivatives in preparation for the winter season. The increase is estimated to reach a high of about 1.2 million tons, which could be enough for the next two months. The Refinery also increased its reserve of crude oil from its Aqaba center, by 250,000 tons.

■ The International Company for Fabrics Production will increase its exports during the coming few months, to the amount of \$570,000. Ameen Shajrawi, the board chairman, said that the company has signed a private contract last month, which will raise its financial credit. The company, which formed in 1989, raised its capital at the beginning of this year to JD 2.5 million. The company has surprisingly showed a speedy recovery following its huge losses, which were estimated at JD 800,000 earlier last year.

■ A Jordanian company signed a deal last week to purchase a Belgian plastics company. The Century Investment Group concluded the private contract with an Israeli counterpart, and will jointly share-hold the European company. Plastic productions are to be targeted at the Middle East and European markets. Sources from the company estimated the expected sales to be about US\$ 20 million.

■ Over one million tourists visited the Kingdom during the past ten months. According to statistics made available by the Ministry of Tourism, the total income of these tourist groups was estimated at about JD 500 million. Sources said that the recent crisis between Iraq and the UN threw a dark cloud over the field of tourism, which forced many foreign tourists to cancel their bookings with Jordanian hotels and travel agents.

■ The Jordanian Contractors Association held a seminar last week focusing on the labor force and its effects on the construction field. The meeting, which took place in Irbid, shed light on the foreign labor, and demanded regulations for controlling this issue.

■ A new joint Jordanian-Saudi food company was formed earlier this month. The Arab Development for Food Industries Company, was created by the Jordanian businessman Faisal Bashiri and his Saudi counterpart Nasser Mohammed Saleh, with \$5 million worth of capital.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 18 November 1998

| | Buy JD | Sell JD |
|------|--------|---------|
| US\$ | 0.7080 | 0.7100 |
| £ | 1.1510 | 1.1568 |
| DM | 0.4124 | 0.4145 |
| ¥ | 0.4801 | 0.4825 |
| HK\$ | 0.1227 | 0.1233 |
| SG\$ | 0.5624 | 0.5652 |
| NT\$ | 0.3667 | 0.3685 |
| INR | 0.0419 | 0.0421 |

Iraqi-US stand-off creates havoc in money markets

AMMAN (Star)—Money markets all over the world simmered down as they heard of an unexpected breakthrough in the Iraq-United States stand-off earlier this week.

The action relieved investors as Iraqi President Saddam Hussein showed his first hint of flexibility over the UN weapons inspections commission.

The standoff has created havoc in international money markets. New York, London, Tokyo, Paris, Frankfurt and Hong Kong were deeply affected, with rapid fluctuations in shares and share-prices being the order of the day.

And the situation was the same in the region. Money markets in Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Jeddah, all experienced jitters last week as the case for US military strikes became more imminent.

International crude oil futures experienced a tumble on the New York Mercantile Exchange as market participants interpreted the Iraqi action of ceasing cooperation with UNSCOM as disruption in oil exports.

In other international commodity markets, prices fell sharply as the tension increased.

Financial experts have since said that this was a natural reaction, because any strike would have caused instability in the region.

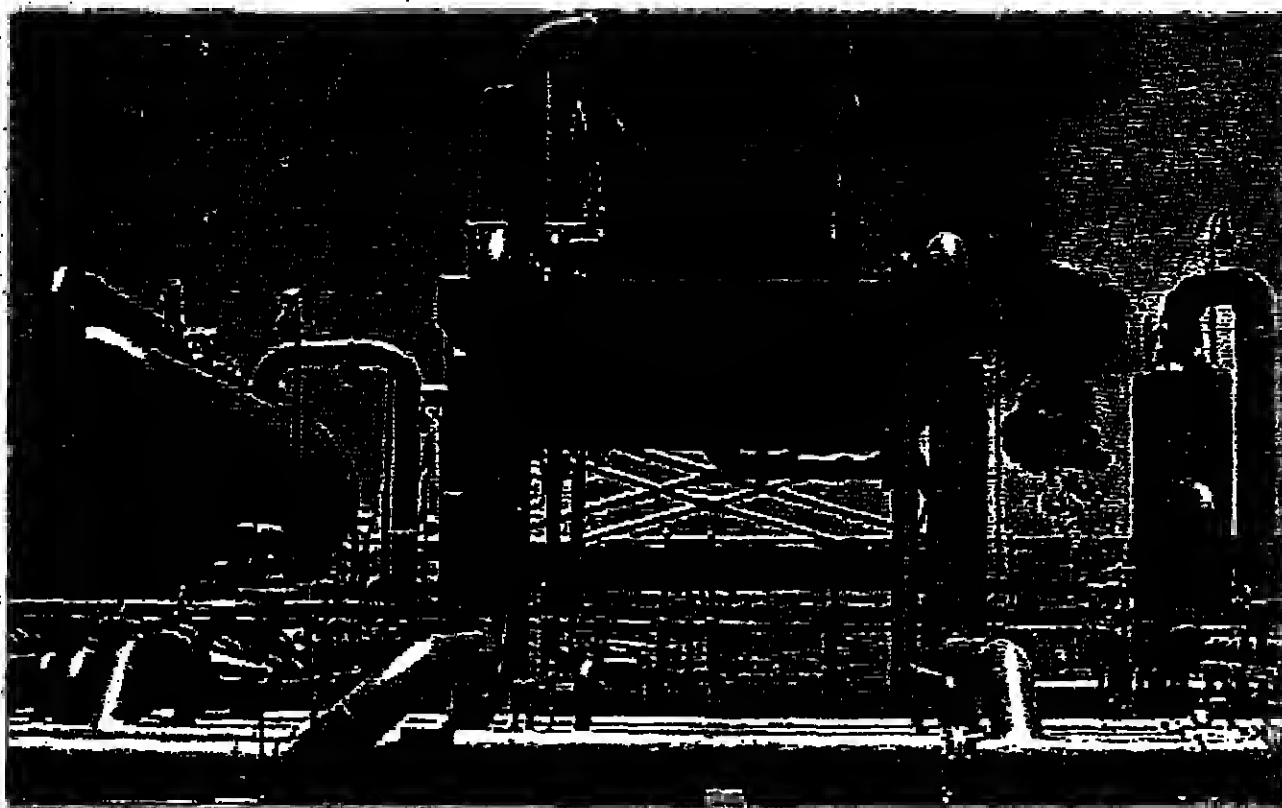
The US and Britain have insisted that sanctions to remain in place until weapons inspectors verify Iraq has no capability to produce weapons of mass destruction.

The threat of strikes against Iraq itself a key oil producer pushed oil prices higher. This is despite doubts that crude exports were going to be disrupted.

Traders in America were apprehensively hesitant. Crude for December delivery finished down, last Friday, at \$13.57 for a barrel. And this had its toll on heating oil, and unleaded gasoline that fell 0.58 cent to 41.05 cents a gallon.

However, the December crude oil on the New York Mercantile Exchange ended down 0.7 cent at \$12.57 per barrel as the threat over expected disruption to Iraqi oil sales eased.

"We are favoring any peace initiative likely to satisfy Iraq's just and balanced demands," the Iraqi President



Oil flows continue despite recent crisis

was quoted as saying.

While the US President Bill Clinton called the comments nothing new, futures investors in the country took them as a sign that Iraq's intentions may back down on its refusal to cooperate with the UN inspectors.

President Clinton ordered to send ships, personnel and traditional weapons to the Gulf in preparation for an attack against Iraq, who repeatedly challenged the inspections as it seeks to pressure the UN Security Council to lift crippling sanctions imposed after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

International benchmark Brent rose, with the December futures contract up as much as 40 cents to \$12.51, as US forces converged on the Gulf. Iraq has warned earlier that he would have to stop crude oil exports under the UN oil-for-food program if independent monitors were withdrawn as a result of US expected military moves.

The crisis fueled demand for bonds. Traders said that some firmer prices mostly reflected movements of cash out of

stocks. Most of the European stock markets were down at least one percent following losses in the US and Asia during the first week of this month.

The Dow Jones Industrials rose last weekend, to 8,919.59 on light New York Exchange volume of 600 million shares. Wide expectation that the Federal Reserve is seeking to consolidate the improvement in international markets, notched rates lower once again this week.

The Fed has lowered rates by 50 basic points since late September, and is expected by some to lower rates as much as 75 basic points more over the next half year. Retail sales rose in the meantime, to a sharper-than-expected one percent, while analysts noted that the nation's sluggish job growth slowed future hiring.

"Grain, soybeans and other commodities' futures prices fell sharply on the Chicago Board of Trade after the US government reported weekly export sales that were below expectations. Future prices also were

pressured by increased farm sales of newly harvested crops.

Market participants also expressed concern for the logistics of a US food donation package to Russia, which they say will result in purchasing delays. Earlier reports said that Russian officials were working to defuse the Iraqi crisis. Where oil lagged, however, the balance of the market improved.

Dealers mentioned last week that the \$41 billion Brazilian aid package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) helped bolster the now growing confidence, and that the worst of the global financial crisis is behind them. US blue chips rose last week, while investors cheered the big IMF deal with the Brazilian government, to solve its teetering economy, and avoid an Asia-style contagion in Latin America.

European stocks, on the meantime, fell amid disappointment over Japan's latest fiscal stimulus plans. These measures outlined during the past week by the ruling Liberal Democratic Party were deemed insufficient to lift Japan's economy out of

recession, boosting the dollar.

The Nikkei average finished the week, on 14 November, with 2.5 percent lower on the uninspiring plan. But the US shares opened mixed. The dollar rose sharply against the Japanese yen, climbing more than 1.5 percent to a one-month high of 123.92 yen.

Tokyo Stock Exchange to close trading floor

By Gillian Tett in Tokyo

AS JAPAN'S economic pressures mount, another financial tradition—yesterday crumbled. The Tokyo Stock Exchange, which once aspired to overtake London and New York, yesterday decided to scrap its 120-year-old open floor trading amid a funding crisis.

The move is partly intended to bring Tokyo more into line with other exchanges such as London and Paris, which have already replaced open trading with an entirely computerized system, officials say.

However, the exchange also hopes that abolishing the trading floor will enable it to boost its revenues, which have been sharply dented by a drop in the Nikkei index and collapse in trading volumes. Indeed, the situation has become so serious that TSE has recently warned its

members that it could post a ¥29 billion (\$24 million) deficit for the year to April 1999, after recording a ¥1.1 billion first-half deficit.

Mitsubishi Yamaguchi, TSE president, said: "The function of floor trading is waning and it is costly to maintain the system."

The move is a blow for Tokyo traditionalists, who have long viewed the trading pit as a potent symbol of Kabutocho, Tokyo's equivalent of Wall Street. The current lavish trading floor started operating just before the "bubble economy" developed in 1985.

However, the TSE has recently updated its computer systems, leaving the role of the trading floor faltering. Indeed, the TSE calculates that only 6 per cent of trades now take place on the floor, which costs around ¥300 million a year to run. Mark O'Neil, a Tokyo

managing director of Morgan Stanley, said: "This reform is an efficient and rational move. It will probably not have too much impact on liquidity."

The TSE has not yet decided how it will use the old trading floor. However, some officials have suggested putting the computer systems there so it can serve as a tourist attraction, or moving the TSE administrative offices on to the site to cut costs.

The TSE is also considering other measures to raise revenues, such as increasing the cost of listing fees. And although some brokers have warned this may discourage listings, Mr Yamaguchi also unveiled new plans to attract additional members by relaxing other listing requirements. "It is necessary to make the TSE more effective by reducing costs and speeding up transactions," Mr Yamaguchi said.

Over the last year a clutch of non-Japanese companies, such as Cable and Wireless, have defected from the TSE, claiming that trading volumes are too low to justify the expense of a listing. This has brought the total number of non-Japanese companies which are listed down to 51, from a peak of 127 earlier this decade.

Meanwhile, daily trading volumes have fallen to around 400 million shares, less than a third of their levels during the 1980s bubble. This is expected to fall even further in the coming months when the government introduces new forms of "off exchange" trading as part of Big Bang deregulation, which will allow brokers to circumvent the TSE.

Financial Times Syndication



A share trader orders DaimlerChrysler shares during early trading at the Frankfurt stock exchange, 17 November. Germany's blue-chip DAX index held steady in negative territory on Tuesday as investors chose to mark time ahead of the U.S. Federal Open Market Committee's decision on interest rates later.

Reuters

Asia faces fastest growing AIDS problem amid fiscal woes

By David Lamb

BANGKOK—Throughout the 1970s and '80s, as AIDS ravaged millions of lives from the Americas to Africa, a mysterious thing was happening in Asia. The world's most populous continent was so untouched that scientists wondered if Asians had a gene that made them immune.

But the late arrival of AIDS in Asia turned out to be only a medical fluke. Africa still has the vast majority of AIDS cases, but Asia has developed the world's fastest-growing problem at the same time when economic crisis is forcing governments to slash spending across the board, including on health.

In Thailand, 2.3 percent of all adults are HIV positive, and AIDS claims more than 50,000 lives a year. However, Thailand has made fighting AIDS a top priority, and even though its economy is in tatters, has managed

to maintain spending on AIDS education at \$80 million a year.

Its program is changing people's behavior, and international officials consider it a model for the developing world. "Thailand is a good example that if you do something right, you can actually make a significant impact on the way the AIDS epidemic unfolds," said Steven Krause, a UN AIDS official in Bangkok.

In the developed world, recent medical advances have drastically reduced the number of AIDS deaths. Deaths in the United States fell 47 percent last year, pushing it out of the top 10 killers for the first time since 1990. But the United Nations reports that 4 million people in India and 400,000 in China are living with HIV

or AIDS. By the year 2000, health researchers say 12 million Asians could be infected, and the cost to Asia's hurting economies could reach \$52 billion, most of it through the loss of a work force killed or enfeebled in

By the year 2000, health researchers say 12 million Asians could be infected, and the cost to Asia's hurting economies could reach \$52 billion, most of it through the loss of a work force killed or enfeebled in the prime of life.

the prime of life.

Some Asian countries are largely ignoring the problem for political or religious reasons. Others are fighting a losing battle because of their poverty.

AIDS is primarily a heterosexual disease in Southeast Asia. Thailand, the hardest-hit country in the region, had no recorded AIDS cases in 1984 and only a handful in the late 1980s. But by 1991, its military government already had begun pouring resources

into research and education in an unusual attempt to change sexual behavior in a nation where many men take "minor" or secondary wives and most, at one time or another, visit a prostitute.

First, it set up a national surveillance system to track the disease and study sexual activity. It made a test case of the 60,000 young male conscripts who enter the army annually. Free condoms were provided to

brothels and massage parlors. Some establishments that did not enforce 100 percent-condom-use policies were shut down. TV and radio stations were given explicit AIDS prevention commercials that ran every hour. Teachers spoke openly with students about the dangers of unsafe sex.

Nearly 1 million Thais test HIV positive, and poverty caused by economic problems is pushing more people toward prostitution or drugs, increasing their risk of AIDS. Still, there is evidence the government's effort is changing sexual behavior, which in turn is slowing the rate of infection.

In northern Thailand, where more than four of every 10 prostitutes tested HIV positive, 58 percent of all 21-year-old males reported visiting a "sex worker" in 1991; 39 percent did not use a condom. By 1995, the percentage of 21-year-olds who had

bought sex during the year had dropped to 24 percent and that of non-condom users to 7 percent. That officials say the decline in visits to prostitutes is probably the result of the overall education program, and growing awareness that commercial sex is dangerous.

By the standards of sub-Saharan Africa, which has 21 million HIV positive people and has recorded 83 percent of the world's AIDS deaths, Asia's infection rate still is relatively low. But the rapid spread of AIDS since 1990 and the fact that Asia is home to two-thirds of the world's population raises fears the continent will end up leading the globe in the number of AIDS cases, health officials say.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Life on the edge

By Sama Abu Sharar
Star Staff Writer

'LIFE ON the edge' could be a name of a movie but it is actually an appropriate description of the life of the Iraqi people today.

On top of the hardship, as a result of the long years of sanctions imposed by the UN, the Iraqi people also have to put up with the continuous threats of American military strikes. The latest stand-off between Iraq and the UN is only one example of this.

Iraqis have always been proud people, despite their suffering first from the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s and later from the Gulf War and its aftermath. The only crime these people have committed is that they belong to a country which has been chosen as a target by a superpower.

Although the tension in the region seemed to have subsided, the US promised that in future it would not refer back to the UN Security Council, if it had cause to strike Iraq.

Although relief was expressed by people in the Arab world, it is Iraqis who have shown most courage during this impending conflict.

The current situation is not of their making but has a global dimension. But the question is how long can the people of Iraq go on? Thousands of children have died because of the scarcity of medicine and other facilities and the majority of the population are in a poverty trap; the more lucky ones are just about making it.

Iraq, which was once a great center of civilization has become a devastated country with absolutely nothing to offer. But who is to blame? America, Europe or the Arabs. All these parties must in the final analysis have a share. The US must surely take the majority of the blame for it is being seen as the people who want the UN sanctions to continue. The Europeans must also be blamed for not making a decisive stand.

And lastly Arabs. Surely they have to take the blame for not adopting a united stand. Deeds and not words are what is needed at this crucial stage.

What is needed is the removal of the eight-year-old sanctions. This can only be achieved if we as Arabs pitch together and speak our minds as one.

Iraqis relieved to have averted attack

By John Daniszewski

BAGHDAD, Iraq—They had been only hours away from a devastating military bombardment, and many Iraqis awoke last Sunday still wondering if the US missiles and fighter jets gathering in the Arabian Gulf would be unleashed against them.

But by day's end, they had their answer. President Clinton confirmed in Washington that the United States would acknowledge the Iraqi government's promise to resume unconditional cooperation with UN weapons inspectors, thereby removing the immediate danger of a military attack.

Iraqis responded with broad smiles and thumbs-up signs as they heard the news. Their leaders, predictably, were quick to portray what amounted to a 180-degree turnaround by President Saddam Hussein on the issue of UN weapons inspectors into a moral triumph for Iraq over its American foe.

Iraq managed "to prove to the whole world that our views are correct," Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan told state television. "This is the foundation and basis of our victory."

"There is a sense of relief," said political scientist Wamidh Nadhim. "The country has avoided a military strike." For Nadhim, a professor at Baghdad University, the crisis was a mixed bag for Iraq. In comparison with earlier confrontations with the West, he said, the Iraqi government was not so successful this time in preparing support for its position among Arab states and sympathetic countries on the UN Security Council. The Iraqi leadership will draw a lesson from this, he added.

But he praised Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's timing in defusing the crisis by rapidly responding to a letter sent last Friday by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan appealing to him to resume cooperation with UN weapons inspectors.

Annan's letter was received in Baghdad about 4 am last Saturday. Within 12 hours, Saddam Hussein had convened his Baath Party leadership and the Revolutionary Command Council, and an Iraqi Foreign Ministry official was on the phone to UN offices here, telling Annan's special envoy, Prakash Shah, that a positive reply was on its way.

"Saddam Hussein realized that there would be no further mediation and that therefore the United States would hit Iraq soon, and so he reacted with alacrity," Nadhim said. The Iraqi leader "was very clever," he said. "He acted as though he knew it was a race against time."

On the streets of Baghdad, Iraqis offered different views Sunday of what they felt Iraq



Saddam Hussein

had accomplished in its two-week standoff with the United Nations. For some, the main success was that Iraq had gained a hearing by the international community of its

demand that economic sanctions imposed since the country's occupation of Kuwait in 1990 be lifted soon. For others, the gain was simply that their president had thwarted

the intention of the United States and its British allies to launch an attack and that, at the very last minute, Saddam Hussein had again driven a diplomatic wedge between the United States and countries sympathetic to Iraq, such as France, Russia and China. Thawra, the newspaper of the ruling Baath Party, exulted in Iraq's change of course just as it had earlier enthusiastically approved of the decision to cease cooperating with the weapons inspectors. The decision to cooperate again "pulled the carpet out from under the feet of the American administration, which has become used to distorting the facts relating to Iraq and engineering excuses to commit aggression against it," the paper said in an editorial.

Although there was widespread relief that an attack had been averted, many people last week had seemed, outwardly at least, not to care one way or the other about the possibility of an attack, saying it was all the same to them whether foreign aircraft struck or not. "We were not scared," a 60-year-old retiree said in a typical response. "We are dead already from the sanctions."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Arab states relieved; Israel wary

By Lee Hockstader

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—For the second time in a year, Arab states expressed relief that threatened US airstrikes against Iraq had been averted, while Israel, the target of 39 Iraqi Scud missiles in the 1991 Gulf War, took a slightly more wary view.

"Now we are not talking about military strikes. We are talking about an exchange of views and letters and commitments," Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa said. "I believe this is a very important opening and the problem we hope will be defused."

Jameel Hujailan, secretary general of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council, expressed hope that the matter will end in a diplomatic solution as the Iraqi people are Arab brothers.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement: "Israel has no illusions about the intentions of Saddam Hussein. The degree of his compliance with his commitments is always in doubt and therefore Israel will continue to keep its eyes open and ensure it will be ready for every possible situation in the future."

On both sides of the Middle

East divide, Arab and Jewish reactions were muted to the apparent resolution of the showdown over Iraq, a reflection, perhaps, that the next crisis might be only months away.

Word that Washington, at the last minute, aborted planned missile attacks against Iraqi targets ignited no street celebrations or triumphal speeches in the Middle East. Rather, there was a sense that the US-Iraqi cycle of tension, challenge and resolution was becoming routine.

"If the choice is between a military response and the return of the inspectors, then the return of the inspectors is a preferred outcome," said Gerald Steinberg, a scholar at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies at Israel's Bar-Ilan University. "Assuming now there will be a lot of pressure on Saddam to allow the inspections to go forward, it narrows the ability of Iraq to maintain its facilities for chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. Some of those things will be rolled back a bit."

Shai Feldman, director of the Jaffe Center, a think tank in Tel Aviv, said it appeared at first blush that Saddam had again misread US determination to keep him in check. But, he

added, there might be another interpretation. "It could be his whole purpose is not the end of inspections but the end of sanctions. If the French and the Chinese and the Russians and others become increasingly vocal on this issue, maybe he won."

During the previous Gulf showdown, in February, tens of thousands of Israelis thronged gas mask distribution centers and many others left the country. Officials issued contradictory and confusing statements. This time, Israelis took the latest crisis in stride and their leaders' remarks on the potential dangers were intentionally subdued.

Some Israelis, still smarting from the memory of Iraq's attacks on the Tel Aviv area in 1991, are taken with the idea of seeing Saddam whacked with cruise missiles. Many others were quietly pleased that war was averted.

"We hope the return of the inspectors to normal work will enable meaningful inspections that will prevent development and manufacture of weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles," Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai said in prepared statement.

New dispute roils Middle East peace process

By Tracy Wilkinson

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—Lest anyone think the Israeli-Palestinian peace process was back on track, a new skirmish flared last week over Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's repetition of a vow to declare an independent state next May.

This time Arafat was reported to have said Palestinian "guns are ready" to defend the new state, even as he appealed to Israelis to accept Palestinian independence as "a bridge for love and peace."

The Israeli government—which itself repeatedly delayed approval of the peace deal and then attempted to place conditions on it last week—responded angrily and accused Arafat of "declaring war" on the process.

This latest dispute came as US special envoy Dennis Ross, who is in Jerusalem, attempted to nudge the two sides closer to carrying out the interim peace accord signed 23 October at the White House. Under the so-called Wye agreement, Israel is supposed to cede a further 13 percent of the West Bank to Palestinian control in exchange for security guarantees from the Palestinians.

Additional steps scheduled

to be taken in this crucial week of the phased agreement include the withdrawal of Israeli troops from a portion of the West Bank land that is being handed over; the release of 250 Palestinian prisoners being held by Israel; the opening of a Palestinian airport in the Gaza Strip; the establishment of a safe-passage route for Palestinians traveling from Gaza to the West Bank; and the arrest of 10 Palestinians wanted by Israel for murder. The agreement also calls for both sides to refrain from "unilateral" actions.

But Arafat continues to announce his plan to unilaterally declare an independent Palestinian state when the original Oslo peace accords expire 4 May if final negotiations are not complete. The government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is threatening to respond by annexing large chunks of the West Bank.

In speeches last week marking the 10th anniversary of the Palestinians' original declaration of independence, Arafat vowed that he will never "retreat from the goal" of a sovereign state with Jerusalem as its capital.

"The state of Palestine, which we are building, stone by stone, grasping its lands inch



Arafat



Netanyahu

by inch—will be without doubt the state of all Palestinians," Arafat said Sunday in a speech broadcast on Palestinian radio and television that was largely conciliatory to Israelis.

In separate comments to a meeting of his political movement, Fatah, in the West Bank

Ramallah, Arafat reportedly added that "our guns are ready and we will use them if they stop us from praying in Jerusalem."

Three people who were present at the meeting confirmed to the Los Angeles Times the gist of the statement,

which departed from a text that was released publicly.

A senior adviser to Netanyahu, David Bar-Ilan, issued a statement accusing Arafat of "declaring war on the peace process." Further Israeli reaction, however, was muted, focusing only on the Palestin-

ian state issue and not on the allusion to guns.

Netanyahu, speaking after a Cabinet session, warned that for the Palestinians to declare a state with Jerusalem as its capital would "shatter" the peace agreement.

Jerusalem is claimed by both Israelis and Palestinians, and its status is one of the most difficult issues to be resolved in final negotiations between the two sides.

It was not clear whether the weekend's controversy would jeopardize the Wye agreement, which is meant to open the way to those final negotiations but which has been forced to weather Palestinian terrorist bombings, Israeli government delays and other impediments.

An unusually upbeat Saeb Erekat, the chief Palestinian negotiator, emerged from a planning meeting with Ross and Netanyahu's Cabinet secretary, Dan Naveh. All three pronounced the meeting positive. Erekat said Arafat's vow to declare a state was an expression of his lifelong vision of sovereignty; Naveh said such statements were "not helpful."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

This could be curtains for UNSCOM

By Barton Gellman

WASHINGTON—Iraq's ostensible surrender, the fifth in a recurring drama during the Clinton presidency, disguises an outcome substantially unlike the earlier ones. This one marked the death throes of an experiment in compulsory disarmament without conquest, the LA Times-Washington Post News Service reported.

The cease-fire ending the 1991 Gulf War left economic and military strangleholds on Iraq: an oil embargo and a United Nations team charged with expunging whole classes of weapons from Iraq's arsenal.

For more than seven years, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has struggled to break those holds. When the oil embargo survived his last attempt, on 30 October, he tried to finish off the UN Special Commission, or UNSCOM, that has been dismantling him. Despite his formal climb-down Saturday, American and foreign officials said that effort is succeeding.

There is almost no one left, in UNSCOM or out, who argues that the special commission has the means to finish its work against determined Iraqi efforts to frustrate it. The US priority is to keep the oil embargo, which restricts Iraq to a minor regional power. For that UNSCOM need only certify—quite truthfully—that Iraq has not accounted fully for its ballistic missiles and nuclear, biological and chemical weapons programs.

Loathe though it is to frame it this way, the Clinton administration's strategic imperative is to manage two kinds of long-term decline in its position against Iraq. One is the decline of UNSCOM's diplomatic backing and its daily struggle on the ground in Iraq. The Clinton administration now shares the view of its Security Council rivals in Moscow, Beijing and Paris that UNSCOM's reach

exceeded its grasp. The commission tried, in effect, to exercise the privileges of a conquering power even though President George Bush chose not to topple Saddam Hussein and remake Iraq on the model of postwar Germany or Japan.

Much to the commission's chagrin, even its strongest government sponsors are beginning to speak of UNSCOM in the past tense. Clinton administration officials may not be so blunt as Senator Richard G. Lugar, who described the special commission as "toast," but one spoke of "a post-UNSCOM world" and another described the arms panel as "an effective instrument for seven years that may have outlived its effectiveness."

"Disarming Iraq against its will without occupying the country was at the root of the problem UNSCOM faced," said a European diplomat whose diagnosis matches that of his counterparts in Washington. "Had the coalition walked to Baghdad and replaced the government, we could have concluded UNSCOM's mission in a matter of months. Because we are not occupying the country, and because the resolutions of the United Nations all mention the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, we have been of the view all along that we can dismantle those weapons only if there is a degree of Iraqi cooperation."

A second decline, which began to influence US decision-making more than a year ago, is the passage of a historical high point of American influence in the Middle East. While still "an unrivaled power" in the region, as one senior policymaker put it, the United States no longer can count on "the Pax Americana" that prevailed since the Gulf War.

The US supremacy that began the long cat-and-mouse game with Iraq arose from a unique confluence of favorable events. The aura of invincible American might, cultivated by the video-minded

briefers of the Gulf War, faded with the ambiguous results of lesser skirmishes since. Russia's return to the region—as arms supplier, debt collector and diplomatic force—revived some of the great power competition that had disappeared with the Soviet Union's collapse. And despite the 23 October Israeli-Palestinian accord, the momentum of America's role as regional peace broker is diminished from the heady period of the 1991 Madrid summit and the breakthrough deals of 1993-95 with Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Even so, the US position is improved for the moment in comparison to last winter's similar crisis with Iraq. "We've given the diplomatic approach a great deal of time to play out," muting French and Russian criticism, said one White House official. Expansion of the oil-for-food program to \$10.5 billion a year, with UN control over Iraqi expenditures, "takes away the humanitarian card he was trying to play last year." With the Wye River Israeli-Palestinian accord, "no one can criticize us for not having made an extraordinary effort to bring about resumption of the peace process."

All that made this a good time, by the administration's reckoning, to reconcile US ends and means in the region without damaging American credibility or that of the Security Council. The aim is to prevent Saddam's regime from posing again—as it did when it invaded Kuwait in August 1990—a threat to the Arabian peninsula, the world's major petroleum resource.

Measured by conventional forces, the administration makes a convincing case that it has that objective well in hand. The destruction of the Gulf War and the \$120 billion in lost revenues of the oil embargo have left Iraq's army far from its putative status—as the Bush administration declared it—as the fourth-largest in the world.



The lead vehicle of the United Nations convoy, carrying the UNSCOM weapons inspectors, passes a poster of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in the town of Faluja, west of Baghdad, 17 November. A plane carrying the first UN arms monitors to return to Iraq since the resolution of the crisis over weapons inspections landed at a military airport 80 km (50 miles) west of Baghdad on Tuesday. A UN official said 86 inspectors and support staff had arrived in Baghdad.

Anthony H. Cordesman, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, estimates that Iraq would have had to import \$12 billion in arms since 1991 merely to sustain the

diminished armed forces Saddam Hussein had after the rout suffered in Kuwait. To sustain Iraq's prewar levels, Cordesman estimates, it would have had to import nearly \$48 billion in arms.

As Iraq's army and Air Force declined, the United States built a peace-time military force in the region—even apart from the buildup underway now—that is far more powerful than before.

Africa's first world war

By Mark Turner

REBEL LEADER Jean-Pierre Ondekane is dressed for the revolution. Brand new Converse trainers, a hooded black tracksuit, Nike USA emblazoned on the front, matching baseball cap, chunky gold watch.

Completing the outfit is an essential accessory—a briefcase-sized satellite phone, deferentially proffered by a grim-faced deputy, whose drab camouflage kit provides a sharp contrast to guerrilla chic.

Commander Ondekane would not look out of place competing the MTV music awards. Instead, he is the military commander of a rebel movement waging a war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly Zaire, which is sucking in its neighbours and threatening to destabilise all of central and southern Africa.

The rebellion is barely three months old, but close to half of Africa's third-largest country is in the hands of Ondekane, at the heart of what might become, in the words of Susan Rice, the US under-secretary of state for Africa, the continent's "first world war." To many eyes, it already is.

Central Africa is bound by a web of political, economic and personal intrigue every bit as complex as early 20th century Europe. In the centre of the web lies Congo, offering countless riches, a springboard for the insurgencies plaguing the governments of Sudan, Angola, Rwanda and Uganda, and an ethnic mix with spine-chilling potential for conflict.

This is a region haunted by the horrors of 1994, when Rwanda's militant Hutu massacred close to one million Tutsis, while the world stood by and let it happen.

The road from Rwanda to the Congo is littered with refugee camps, battered United Nations tarpaulins and an endless stream of soldiers who stand guard against the remaining Hutu insurgents. Forests and banana plantations along the route have been razed to deny rebels a hiding place.

"It's terrible," says Vianney, a Tutsi taxi driver who fled to Goma during the 1994 Rwanda massacre, as he points to the temporary shacks in which refugees still eke out a living. "I used to have so much family in Kigali [Rwanda's capital]. Now they are all gone."

Ever since those events, Goma, a small Congolese border town on the shores of Lake Kivu, has found itself in the midst of a social and political maelstrom unrivalled anywhere in the world. First, it served as a home to thousands of Tutsis fleeing the violence in Rwanda. Then, it became a base for hundreds of thousands of Hutu refugees, in their ranks the Interahamwe militia which carried out the 1994 genocide. They still mount operations from the town's forested northern perimeter.

Goma has remained in the front line. In 1996 and 1997, it was swept up in Laurent Kabila's rebellion, the man chosen by Rwanda and Uganda to topple Zaire's ageing dictator Mobutu Sese Seko. Kabila is now fighting for his political life as his former backers seek to replace him.

Today, the people of Goma are as poor as ever, and find themselves in the grip of another Rwandan-backed rebel force denouncing another dictator in the capital, Kinshasa—this time Kabila. Rwanda and Uganda may have tried to deny it, but aircraft at Goma's airport left few doubts about the foreign flavour of this rebellion.

Never far behind the Congolese

rhetoric offered by the rebel leaders lie the unmistakable hallmarks of Paul Kagame and Yoweri Museveni, the Rwandan and Ugandan leaders, who dream of a secure buffer zone on their western borders.

Kabila, the obscure ex-Marxist whom they raised to Congolese president in 1997, has proved a dismal failure, failing to crack down on the Hutu militia still seeking to overthrow Kagame, and espousing an increasingly xenophobic philosophy.

Their new champion, Ondekane, still in his running suit, strides down the street in Goma, fraternising with relaxed but decidedly respectful troops. But the town is tired of war, and of foreign interference.

"This is not a rebellion," shouts Jean, a student from the Free University of the Great Lakes, 15 minutes' trudge away from Ondekane's lakeside villa. "It is an aggression." A group

shortages.

In the east, the story is no different. Throughout Goma, fading French signs with promises of elegant potteries and western fashions adorn semi-detached shops, which contain only the most rudimentary and increasingly expensive goods. Dollars that used to flow from foreigners visiting the guerrillas have dried to a trickle.

"Ever since the rebellion, foreign tourism has been completely destroyed," says Kapepa Sanibili, a tragicomic figure who heads Goma's tourist bureau, shaking his head in despair. "The local population wants the war to finish—it is not useful for anything."

Elegant colonial columns supporting a portico outside Kivu General Store hide shelves stocked with a few tubes of Aquafresh toothpaste, tins of Milo malted drink and nondescript cleaning products in pink plastic bottles. The bulk of the store is empty. A bottle of Johnnie Walker Red Label whisky is perched triumphantly out of reach, but at \$15 few can afford it. In a town where meat and fish have become a rare luxury, most people have to make do with the beans that grow over every inch of Goma's roadsides, and the occasional loaf of cassava bread.

This is Congo's tragedy. In a country so rich, blessed with a potential 100,000 MW of hydroelectric power, and vast mineral wealth, the Congolese have been made one of Africa's poorest people by 100 years of colonial brutality, African corruption and war.

So much promise has been thrown away. In the late 1870s, Lieutenant Verney Cameron, the British explorer, encouraged Belgium's King Leopold with his tales of a veritable El Dorado in the heart of the continent.

"The interior is a magnificent country of unspeakable riches," he told the Royal Geographical Society. "I am confident that with a wise and liberal expenditure of capital, one of the greatest systems of inland navigation in the world might be utilised, and from 30 to 36 months begin to repay any enterprising capitalist."

The frantic activity by the Anglo-American and Iscor companies in the south shows that little has changed as they chase a potential prize of 500,000 tonnes of copper and 10,000 tonnes of cobalt a year. Further north, the Kasai area is groaning with industrial diamonds.

Those seeking to understand Zimbabwe president Robert Mugabe's involvement in the war need look no further. A string of deals with Zimbabwean businessmen close to Mugabe's government has bought Kabila the support of a country that can otherwise ill afford a large-scale military exercise, and whose own population is growing increasingly discontent with the war.

Angola, fighting at home against its own rebels, UNITA, is determined to ensure that neighbouring Congo will deny them the support Mobutu used to provide. And the Ugandan businessmen now thronging Kisangani, the rebel-held city on the bend in the River Zaire, suggest that Museveni's intervention, driven in part by his own need for a secure border with Congo, has commercial rewards.

At the bottom of the pile, the Congolese can do little but rail against the Machiavellian powers they believe

keep them in poverty. Tales abound in Goma of midnight kidnappings and murders by mysterious forces, belying Goma's calm exterior by day. The rebels have organised the administration of the town into Rwandan-style units of 10 houses, each overseen by a local chief, who exerts a tight and ominous grip. In some quarters, people are afraid to leave their houses after 8pm.

The stories are no less harrowing in the government-controlled territories. Kabila's calls for the Congolese to take arms against murderous foreigners has raised yet again the harrowing spectre of inter-ethnic bloodshed in central Africa.

A full-scale humanitarian disaster appears so far to have been averted. The UN's refugee arm, the UNHCR, says that perhaps 200,000 people have been displaced by the present war, but that for the most part they are not in a critical condition. "Many of them were able to take cattle with them, and are able to feed themselves," said an official. But mass displacement, and the de facto divide imposed by the two warring sides, have ripped apart people who rely on access to extended family networks.

"My father, my mother and all my brothers and sisters are in Kinshasa," says 28-year-old Patrick Motindo, waiting outside a letter-writing service run by the International Committee of the Red Cross in Goma. "For three months I have not been able to speak to my family. I am not happy—they should negotiate and find some solution for us; we cannot stay like this."

Faced with such undeniable discontent, the rebels admit they have a problem. "It is true that the people have welcomed the war with reserve," says Lumba Bululu, a former prime minister under Mobutu who now heads the rebellion's political wing, the Congolese Democratic Movement. Bululu nevertheless insists that with time, when people begin to understand what his movement is about, his approval rating will rise. "We want to re-establish the rule of law, we want to give the Congolese people a reason to hope for a better world," he says.

In two years, Kabila has done as much harm as Mobutu did throughout his time. That we must explain.

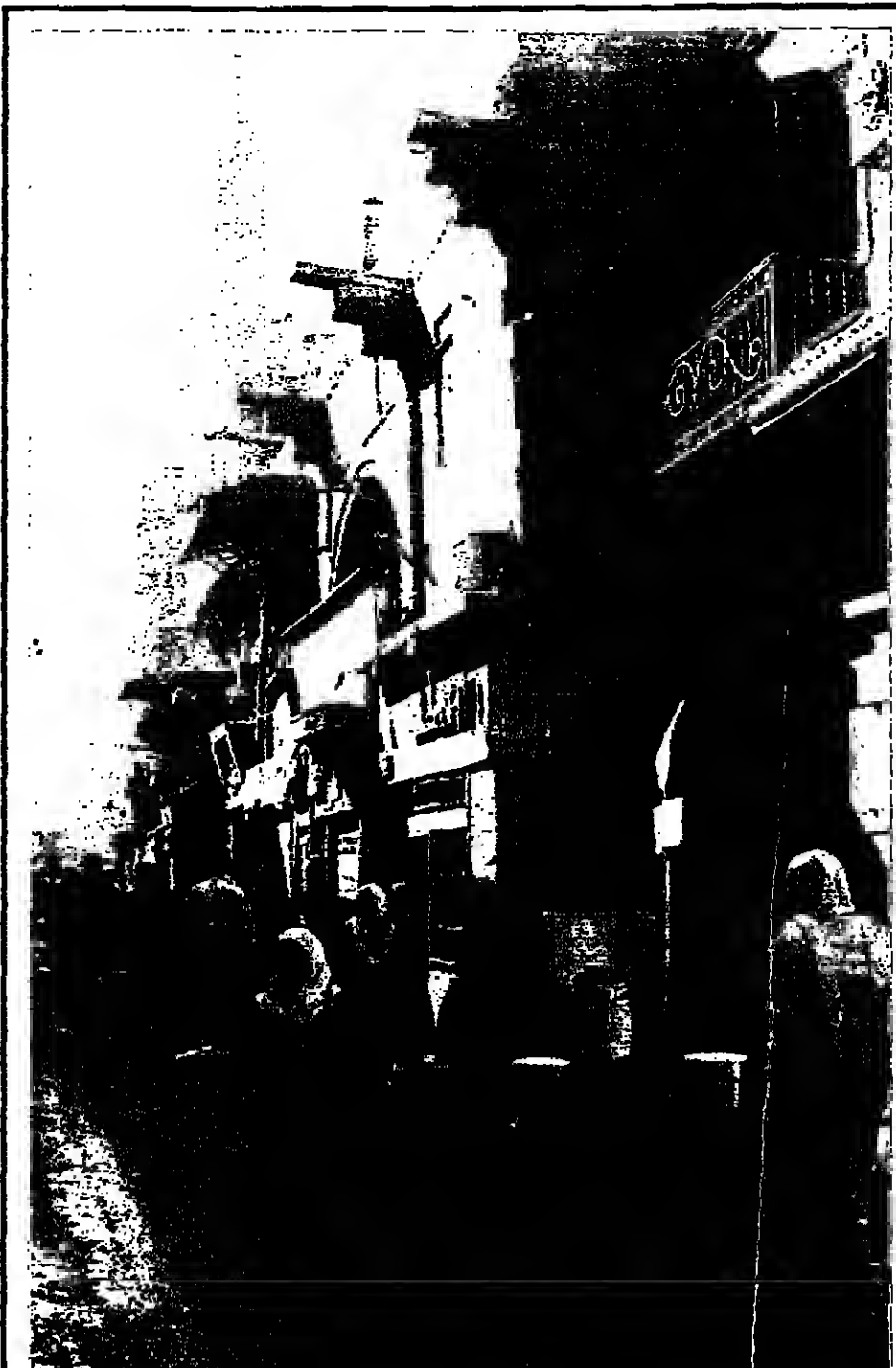
But the price of a rebel victory will be high. With increasing numbers of Zimbabwean troops pouring into the south and pushing towards the east, and Angola insisting it is there to stay, the next few months promise to be bloody and destructive. Yet the rebels refuse to contemplate a ceasefire unless Kabila meets them face to face, which he will not do.

Ondekane, meanwhile, insists that his cause—the overthrow of a tyrant—justifies the potential cost. "We must avoid the situation of the strong-man," he says, filling a plastic chair, and dominating the view of Lake Kivu behind him. "We want a collegiate government." Dismissing fears that he would be another Kabila, Ondekane adds that he is firmly under the control of the politicians. "It is they who have the authority," he says.

As in neighbouring Rwanda, the military would have to be represented in any future administration. "Politicians can forget the cause of the war, so the military must act as a guard-rail," explains Ondekane.

"Isn't that right?" he asks suddenly, turning to his deputies seated nearby. The enthusiastic nodding of heads left few doubts as to who was in charge.

Financial Times Syndication



A street scene, 17 November, showing the Sheikh Mutahhar mosque, built in 1744, in old Cairo from where government officials want to relocate hundreds of workshops and offices which they say encroach on and endanger mediaeval antiquities.

Reuters

Greenhouse gas deadline pact

By Vanessa Houlder

A FINAL burst of round-the-clock negotiations at the United Nations climate change conference in Buenos Aires has secured a deadline of late 2000 for detailing mechanisms for cutting greenhouse gas emissions. The agreement aims to ensure that reductions set at the 1997 conference in Kyoto, Japan, are met.

In recognition of the urgency of the climate change problem, the 170 governments represented in Buenos Aires also resolved to meet more frequently in an effort to achieve faster progress.

After narrowly averting

breakdown of the talks in its last few hours, relieved politicians hailed the Buenos Aires summit as a step forward in the international effort to slow down global warming.

"After hard negotiation, we have achieved a significant success," said Maria Julia Alsogaray, Argentina's minister of natural resources and sustainable development, who presided over the conference. She said the agreement would enable early implementation of the Kyoto protocol, which requires industrialised countries to cut emissions of gases believed to contribute to global warming by 5.2 percent of

1990 levels by 2008-2012.

Priority will be given to sorting out the details of the Clean Development Mechanism, which will give an incentive for industrialised countries to finance clean technology projects in developing countries.

Other mechanisms include the joint implementation of emissions reduction projects and emissions trading, by which countries that exceed their targets for reducing emissions can sell credits to other countries.

The conference made concrete progress on a few other issues, such as support for vulnerable countries to adapt to climate change and technology transfer. In addition, there will be more frequent international meetings at a political level to give guidance to civil servants grappling with the large number of contentious issues still to be decided.

The decision to inject more political involvement into the negotiations over the next two years reflects a recognition that the civil servants negotiating at Buenos Aires achieved little until the arrival of ministers in the last few days. John Prescott, UK environment minister, described the existing way of conducting the negotiations, which left little time for real decision-making, as "nonsense."

Failure of the talks was narrowly averted during the last few hours. Negotiations broke down at 3am on Saturday when representatives from India, China, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Tanzania and the Philippines walked out over the funding of monitoring procedures in developing countries. "It was quite a serious situation," said John Prescott. He was appalled that the talks had risked failure over projects he said were worth £15m (\$25m) a year.

Eventually, agreement was reached when the developing countries were presented with a "take it or leave it" package that included the extra finance they required.

The outcome of the talks met with disappointment from environmental groups. "This is turning into a trade and further down the agenda," said Greenpeace. "Friends of the Earth said: 'The urgency of averting dangerous climate change has been lost in the Buenos Aires inaction plan.' World Wide Fund for Nature welcomed the 'slight progress' but described the talks as a 'trench warfare among bureaucrats.'"

Financial Times Syndication

Wild echoes of a cyberspace war

By Guy Dinmore

JUST AS Vietnam became known as the first television war, the conflict in the Serbian province of Kosovo may go down in history as the first fought through the internet.

Like any other freelance journalists covering the Balkans, the internet and e-mail communications have become an essential tool of my trade. Gone are the days of hammering out telex tapes or fighting for a phone line. What is more, traditional news outlets for us income-seeking "surfers" are now being challenged by the cyberspace providers of multi-media news packages.

It was through one of these upstarts—Out There News—that I have engaged in e-mail conversation with more than 100 people around the globe, anonymous or otherwise, all on the subject of Kosovo.

Threats, advice, exhortations, offers of help, appeals for information—their messages have provided an intriguing insight into how a nasty war in a small, long-forgotten corner of Europe has entered their lives through the computer screen.

"Scott," for example, was worried about his honeymoon in Greece. "Is it still safe to go there?"

A collective message from 40 American tourists about to embark on an Adriatic cruise asked: "In your opinion, sir, what are the chances of such a vacation trip being staged in this troubled area? Perhaps more pertinently, how advisable/safe does such a trip now seem?"

"Sir" was about as good as it got. Many of my distant communicators were convinced I was one of the war-hungry addicts that made a dirty living out of the misfortunes of others.

"Sincerely disgusted" rants: "You must be out of your mind, Guy. You are clearly on the side of the low-life population which is the Serbs. If you want to be

biased to the Serb party, then you should just go to hell and quit reporting."

But, judging by other comments, my reports can't be that one-sided and have touched the nerves of both sides.

L. Pegan wrote: "I can't get away from the impression that you are not only paid well, I would rather say overpaid, by the Albanians. I hope that you do not call yourself an objective reporter because you do not seem to be informed very well. The diatribe ended with a suggestion I should be put on trial by the United Nations war crimes tribunal."

Brian warns me: "I am going to make

US plot to help Slobodan Milosevic [the Yugoslav president] in exchange for favours from the regime."

"T.Majic"—probably a Serb—presents the oft-quoted argument for not giving independence to Kosovo's ethnic Albanian majority. "Why doesn't America allow Hispanics to take over Miami or give independence to Texas and California?" he asks.

"Unsigned," probably a former Nato foot-soldier, writes: "See if you can get protective gear, like a bullet-proof vest and helmet. They saved my life in Bosnia."

Actually, I have both but they've never left the wardrobe. I fear they make me look too much like a Serb policeman. And if I may share one of the secrets of the trade, it's generally only the well-paid TV types who wear such stuff to give the true war-correspondent image during their 'stand-ups' in front of camera.

"S. Cook" asks to be put in touch with both a Serb and an Albanian on each side of the conflict. "I would like to send them my warmest friendship and empathy, hoping that through discourse a shred of peace in the midst of horror may be born."

"Tenta B," writing from her all-American kitchen, says she has just sent her daughter to school and is pouring out the coffee. She thanks me for the "chat" and ends with: "My son is asking for cereal. I have to go now."

Only a few messages come from Kosovo itself. In April, I heard from Gozdim Gecaj, an Albanian, in the small border town of Decane. He simply asked if he could be of any assistance. Unfortunately, the next time I saw Decane was in June after much of the town had been razed by the Serbian police after intense fighting with the Kosovo Liberation Army.

Several hundred people disappeared and I haven't heard from him since.

Writer risks threats, arrest on her return to Bangladesh

By Dexter Filkins

NEW DELHI, India—Taslima Nasrin, a celebrated and incendiary Bangladeshi writer, is on the run in her native land. Nasrin, branded from her country by Muslim extremists four years ago, returned in September to Dhaka, the capital, where her mother lies dying. Nasrin had hoped that controversy about her had calmed enough to permit her return.

Today, Nasrin is in hiding, shifting from one Dhaka apartment to another, trying to stay a step ahead of government officials who want to arrest her and fundamentalists who want her dead.

"Why is this happening?" Nasrin said, calling a telephone from a secret locale. "I usually like to be with my mother in her last days."

Like Indian writer Salman Rushdie, who faces death threats from Iranian fundamentalists, Nasrin is in danger because of her criticisms of Islam. In her 19 books, Nasrin has forcefully criticized communal violence and Islam's treatment of women. And although she enjoys widespread popularity in Bangladesh, she is under siege by fundamentalists who say she speaks blasphemy.

Taslima Nasrin is an infidel, and it is the duty of Muslims to find her out and turn her over to the police," Abu Taher, a leader of the Bangladesh Islamic Assembly, the nation's largest religious party, told a crowd in Chittagong last week.

Taher offered \$2,500—about 10 times the typical annual income—to anyone who can find Nasrin. Other Muslim extremist groups have offered \$5,000 for her slaying. And a magistrate has issued a warrant for her arrest, citing an obscure law that makes insulting a religion a criminal act.

Nasrin, a physician turned poet, novelist and journalist, takes as her fictional raw material the push and pull of current events. Her writings evoke sexual images and portray women straining against the

tyrannies of tradition—explosive stuff in a country where many women still shroud themselves in head-to-toe burkas and eight out of every 10 women are illiterate.

"Women have been taught for centuries that they are the slaves of men," Nasrin said. "I started writing because I wanted to wake women up."

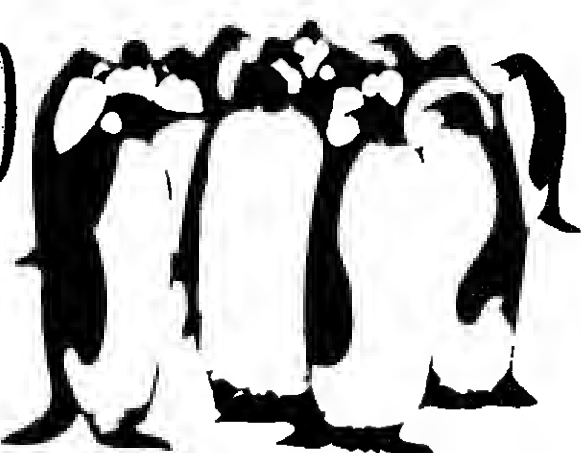
Nasrin, 36, first ran afoul of fundamentalists in 1993, with the publication of her novel "Shame." The book told the story of the Duitas, a Hindu family in Bangladesh harassed by Muslim extremists. The backdrop for the story is the events of December 1992, when a Hindu mob in India destroyed a mosque in Ayodhya. The riots that engulfed India spilled into Bangladesh, where the country's Hindu minority were targeted. "Shame" singled out the fundamentalists for the atrocities against Hindus. But Nasrin did not stop there.

The riots that took place in 1992 in Bangladesh were the responsibility of us all, and we are all to blame," she wrote in the book's preface. "Shame" is a document of our collective defeat.

Her real problems began shortly after the novel's release, when an Indian newspaper quoted Nasrin saying that the "Koran should be revised thoroughly." She denied making the remark, but it was too late. A Muslim cleric issued a "fatwa," or religious edict, against her. Arrested and charged with insulting Islam, she was later freed and left Bangladesh. For the next four years, she stayed in Sweden, France, Germany and the United States.

Nasrin decided to return in September to be with her mother, Idul Wara. Now she again fears for her life. Last week, a magistrate denied her bail and ordered her to surrender by 5 January. If convicted, she could be imprisoned for two years.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

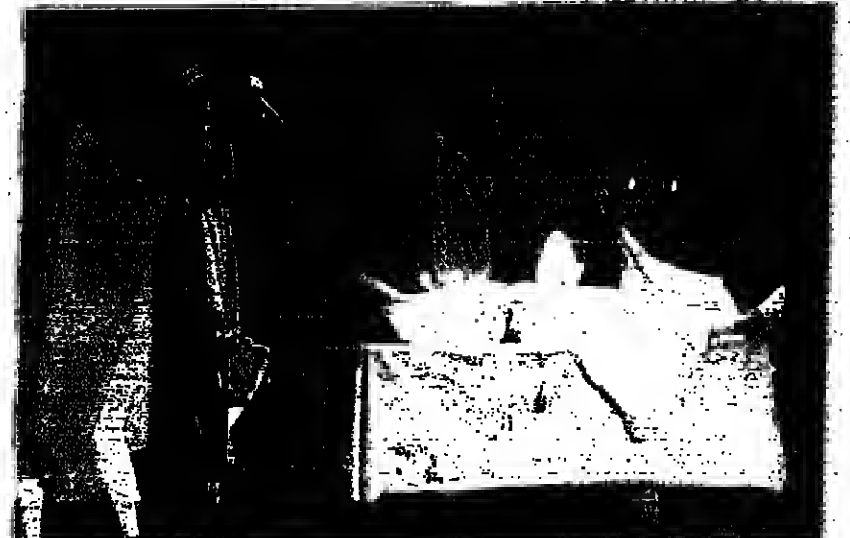
AROUND
TOWN

Theater hits Amman

THE 6TH Jordan Festival of Theater was opened last week at the Royal Cultural Center. Patronized by the Ministry of Culture, the festival is hosting many distinct theatrical productions from all over the Arab world. A number of groups and companies from Jordan, the Palestinian territories, Egypt, Iraq, Bahrain, and Tunisia participated in the theatrical celebration.

The festival, which will last till the end of the month, is presenting many creative plays that portray social and moral theme. These are pan-arab theatrical productions, which are set to reflect main stream theater not only in the region, but through out the world. In this respect, the event is likely to prove a wide forum for the study of theater in Jordan.

Azel Al Kaman (The Violin player) a play originally written by Albert Camus and reproduced by Hakim Harb, was very popular and appreciated by the audiences. The other play, which was a big hit, *Al Bab*, was written by the Iraqi poet, Youssef Al Sayigh, and directed by the Jordanian artist Zeid Al Qudah. Both plays belonged to the school of existentialism.

OFF THE
WALLExpress
yourselfBy Rana Haddad
Special to The Star

IF YOU watch people sing and dance, you will notice one common thing. They are all happy. This week, we had a very good reason to be joyful—the nation celebrated the 63rd birthday of His Majesty King Hussein.

But why do our feelings change from day to day? Sometimes you are happy and humorous, and the next day you are depressed. Our moods seem to change as often as the weather. It depends on the day, the hour, or whom you are with, but I guess that this is reflective of life. We all have different feelings, emotions, and behaviors, and different situations are likely to bring out different reactions.

We have all had our emotions swayed when listening to a certain piece of music. What about a good piece of patriotic music, for instance. At the end of the day, we are all human. Some people believe that emotions should be buried deep down inside yourself, so far down that no one can touch or discover them.

This is wrong, in my opinion. Your emotions should be worn on your sleeve, for everybody to see. You should avoid isolating yourself and accepting any feelings of warmth that come your way.

The other day, I was unable to sleep, because something was bothering me, so I switched on the television. A feature film was showing about a young man who had recently lost his beloved wife, leaving him all alone with a child. It was clear that this man needed to express his feelings, but he chose to isolate himself away from all his friends and family. Only after a while did he begin to scream and cry, and let his emotions out. After doing this, he felt much better, and he began the long road to recovery.

The moral of the story is that we all need to be more open in our lives. Don't ever hesitate to express your feelings, whatever they are, and wherever you are. If you feel them, you should express them. This is the only way to lead a healthy, normal existence.

STAR
ONLINE
<http://star.arabia.com>

'Falling leaves'

A journey across Jordan

By Kofi Attah
Special to The Star

THERE ARE many known and unknown cultural treasures hidden across the length and breadth of Jordan, and a lot of Jordanian and foreign tourists are busy trying to discover them. To help in this search, many galleries in the Kingdom are enthusiastically engaged in the promotion and development of Jordan's cultural heritage. One such gallery is the Jordan River Foundation, which presents to the visitor an exciting collection of old and new products from all over the country.

Upon walking into the Foundation's showroom, you realize immediately that you have entered into an exhibition that is more than a collection of traditional items displayed in a pleasing manner. The Foundation's Fall exhibition under the theme 'Falling Leaves' is under the Royal patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor Al Hussein. It is a warm collection of items from the Foundation's various branches—Bani Hamida, Jordan River Design and Wadi Rayan.

'Falling Leaves' features a complete harmonious collection of hand woven rugs from Bani Hamida, embroidered quilts and cushions from the heart of Amman, handmade baskets from Wadi Rayan, and silver jewelry and natural herbs from Wadi Dana. The exhibition is also displaying a number of paintings of wild flowers in Jordan, including the private collection of Her Royal Highness Princess Rania Al Abdullah, which will be featured in a book to be published in the celebration of the year 2000.

'Falling Leaves' takes the visitor across Jordan, through the variety of



items encompassing warmth, elegant style and excellent quality. "Some of our baskets are not only hand-crafted, but made from banana leaves," declares Ms Reem Shurafa, the sales manager. With its beautiful high ceilings, and with the showroom carved into five halls, the visitor has ample

space to view Jordan's finest products. One picture of a hollyhock is displayed in the main room. This is a spectacular perennial flower that can grow to 3 meters in length. It is found mostly on the slopes above the Jordan Valley. Other flowers such as Irises, with its attractive rose, are testimony of Jordan's natural beauty.

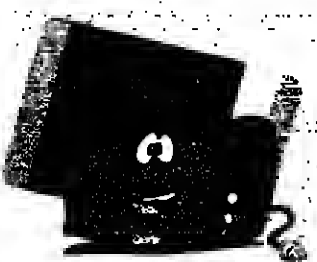
Walking into the adjoining rooms, you will see a fascinating selection of traditional crafted copper and brass ornaments. A number of straw trays, baskets, quilts and rugs from various provinces in Jordan are also displayed.

Much of the exhibition is evidence of Jordan's rich cultural heritage. There are vessels, pottery galore with decorative patterns, and silver jewelry. In the rooms at the back, there are natural and medicinal herbs laid out for inspection. Quilted dolls dressed in traditional Arab and Jordanian costumes are also on display.

'Falling Leaves' does not mean a fall in tradition, rather the culture has been enriched by the passage of time. The exhibition offers the visitor a unique opportunity to take themselves back 50 to 100 years, even to the very beginning of history. 'Falling Leaves' is a vision of the world of yesterday, that continues to shine in the present.

Nothing is more valuable than a rich past. The many artifacts, handicrafts, woodworks and pieces of pottery are items that we must preserve. Reviewing your past via crafts has a long and mythical history.

The exhibition reveals mankind's deep connection with crafts throughout history, not only for their functional qualities, but also for their spiritual satisfaction as well. 'Falling Leaves' will continue to run until 30 November, and is open to the public daily, including Fridays and public holidays, from 9.00 am to 8.00 pm at the Jordan River Foundation Showroom, Jabal Amman, 1st Circle, just off Rainbow Street.

ON
THE
BOX

'Honey, I shrunk the kids'

By Ibtihal Ahmad
Special to The Star

HAVE YOU ever imagined you were being pursued by gigantic ants, scorpions or bumble bees. Well rest assured these are only imaginations that can only become true on the silver screen. In watching last Saturday's movie, 'Honey, I Shrunk the Kids' on JTV, you would have known what it feels like to be small. Well not just small, but really small.

In watching the film we learn to look at little insects as living beings, and we may now stop to think before we crush these helpless little creatures.

The story of the film evolves around four children and their families. The kids were reduced to minuscule size because of a little mishap in their father's lab, who did not know his shrinking machine was actually working and had no idea about what happened to them. The tiny kids end up in the trash can in the back garden. And the story picks up from there.

This film which was produced back in the late 1980s proved quite a favorite with the family. Even five-year-olds watched and enjoyed it, though most of our young children cannot understand English. The reason for their enjoyment lies in the film's illustrative and adventurous nature.

The scene with the huge ant for instance, and its shaking off the tiny kids all over the garden was not only very entertaining, but highly creative.

In the film, however, the garden looked and felt like a safari theme park. The producer, director, and all the technical staff working on the film succeeded in turning the garden into a safari theme park. With slick and sophisticated camera-work techniques, the final image was set children, quite often shorter than a blade of grass, trying to move from one end of the garden to the other. But because of their tiny size, this was a huge feat, not a stroll. In their quest to reach the house, the viewer becomes locked into a scene by scene trepidation as he follows the children trekking and exploring the garden and conquering its obstacles.

Maybe they were not having such good time at the outset of their journey, but where will kids be without a sense of adventure, excitement and imagination.

It was the resourcefulness of the kids that got them through their long and tiresome journey. They were able to tame and befriended the ant and ended up riding on its back to get to the house. They even cried when she was killed by a vicious scorpion. But the journey is hazardous, especially with friends like theirs, who like to play with such gadgets as their father's high-tech lawn mower.

Older children enjoyed the film because of the many funny and sometimes stupid stunts of the actors, and because they could relate to the kids in the movie. Most families enjoyed the film because it was funny and imaginative. Seeing the father hanging from a moving hammock and then falling into the pool with a splash made everybody laugh.

Even though this is the second showing of the film, everybody thought it was worthwhile watching, because of its original and funny theme. Indeed, Jordan TV was successful in choosing all of its films for the holidays, and should be congratulated for keeping the children entertained during the break.

The 'Vrtnica Octet'

Slovenia's musical masterpiece

By Ghassan Joha
Star Staff Writer

JORDANIANS WERE introduced earlier last week to a new form of culture from the 'Vrtnica Octet', a group of male singers from Slovenia. The east European concert was performed last Thursday (12 November) at the Jabri Banquet Hall, under the auspices of the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Slovenia.

The name 'Vrtnica' has a special meaning. It is the name of a beautiful red rose, and is the national symbol of Nova Gorica, the city where the group was formed in 1981.

During the past 17 years, the all-male octet group has participated in hundreds of different cultural events in Slovenia and abroad, and their visit to Jordan was part of a wider regional tour.

The eight-man group consists of professional and amateur singers, and is divided into four sections: first and second tenors, baritone and bass. Their complete repertoire includes a variety of traditional and sacred songs, designed to build a cultural bridge between Slovenia and the other nations of the world.

So far, they have performed over 450 shows all around the world, and they have brought joy to the musical audiences from as far away as Brazil and Argentina.

The evenings repertoire consisted of 17 songs, all of which delighted the audience. Although most of the songs were in their native language, it was still very obvious that the singers had mastered the control of their vocal cords. The show began with a



heartfelt hymn called 'O magnum misterium', and was followed by some traditional peasants songs, sung with passion. The mixture of tenor, baritone and bass formed a delightful sound, that resonated throughout the banquet hall. One song was performed in English. Called 'Deep River', it reminded the group of their love for their homeland, and river 'soca' in particular, which divides the city of Nova Gorica.

The performance was

divided in two parts. The first part included eight songs and various classical pieces on the theme of nationalism. The second part included nine songs, and the singers adopted a new sound, which went down well with all the audience.

Band conductor, Darko Suligoj, told *The Star* after the show, that he was pleasantly surprised at the generous welcome given by the Jordanian people. This was the band's first visit to the

Kingdom.

Asked about the region they came from, Mr Suligoj said that the city of Nova Gorica is well-known for its casinos and entertainment, and it's people enjoy having fun and enjoy life very much. The Slovenia-Italian border city is surrounded by rich countryside, and lies amongst the natural forests at the foot of the Alpine mountains.

After the show, the singers mingled with the audience,

and joined in small-talk for a long while. Many asked why the did not extend their two day visit, as the demand for such performances is high in Jordan. It transpired that they had spent a week performing in Israel, and that consequently they had simply run out of time.

Consequently, more effort needs to be made in the future if we are to compete in the field of tourism and culture.

AGENDA

Exhibition

■ The Instituto Cervantes has a new exhibition of watercolor paintings by the Jordanian female artist Mukarram Haghdouga, at 6 pm. The exhibit, and will continue until 24 November.

■ Abstract paintings by the Jordanian artist Mohammed Abn Aziz are currently showing at the French Cultural Center. The exhibition will last until 28 November.

■ An exhibition of delightful photographs, entitled *Windows and Doors*, is currently showing at the Baladna Art Gallery, at Gardens St. The photos, which taken by the Jordanian artist Hani Hourani, will keep on display until 18 December.

■ The Goethe Institut will organize a series of lectures between 16-24 November. Two lectures will be held this week (23 and 24 November). The first is an account of the Jordanian-German cooperation on excavations in Jordan, whilst the other will focus on the latest developments on the Monuments Conservation Law in Jordan. Both lectures commence at 6:00 pm.

■ The Media Forum in the American Center will mark the 50th anniversary of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of

Human Rights, on Wednesday, 25 November, at 5:00 pm. The considered discussion features the Jordanian panelists who will share their insights on the declaration's relevance today. The Media Forum will be conducted in Arabic.

■ A special concert of an Arab traditional music will be held on 25 November, at the French Cultural Center. The concert will feature the Takht Charqi (The Oriental Orchestra) by shedding light on the Lute, and its fruitful influence on the Arab music.

■ The American Center is showing, today (Thursday) 19 November, the musical movie *An American in Paris*, starring Gene Kelly and Leslie Caron. The movie is expected to be displayed at 5:00 pm.

■ The French movie *La Vie Est Un Long Fleuve Tranquille* (Life is a long quiet river), will be shown on 23 November at the French Cultural Center. The 1988 movie is scheduled to be seen twice, at 6:30 and 8:30 pm.

■ The Death Courier, is a German movie to be shown at the Goethe Institut on 25 November. The movie, which features the horror story of a psycho criminal, will be seen at 7:00 pm.

The Star's Guide

Programs on JTV from 21-27 November

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:30—Antimatter (Cart.)
3:30—The Adventure of the Bush Patrol
4:00—Neighbors (Drama)
4:30—Peer Pressure (Doc.)
5:00—French Prog.
6:10—Wind at my back
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog.
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Murphy Brown
8:00—Today's Health
8:30—The Pretender (Drama)
9:15—ABC of Democracy
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Film:
12:00—Twisted

SUNDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Pink Panther (Cart.)
3:20—Pumpkin Patch
3:30—The Adventures of the Black Stallion
4:00—Big Cat Diary (Doc.)
4:30—Vid Kids
5:00—The American Chart Show
6:00—French Program
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—The Brittas Empire
8:00—French Program
8:30—Walker/ Texas ranger (Police Drama)
9:05—Farming & Ecology
9:30—Behind the Scene
10:00—News in English
10:30—Nothing lasts for ever (New series-pt 1)
11:20—Doogie Howser

MONDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Batman (Cartoon)
3:30—David Copperfield (Children Drama)

TUESDAY



Uncut-with movies, on Tuesday at 9:30 pm.

4:00—Neighbors (Drama)
4:30—French Program
6:10—Wind At My Back
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Program
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Parenthood
8:00—The Internet Café
8:30—Big Sky
9:16—Encounter
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—F.X. - The Illusion

TUESDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—French Cartoon
3:30—Bananas in Pyjamas
4:00—Life Choices (Doc.)

WEDNESDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—The Adventures of



Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 4634149): Event Horizon
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 4634149): Pretty Woman
- Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430): The Mask Of Zorro
- Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430): Saeedi At The American University (Arabic)
- Plaza (Tel: 5699238): Saeedi At The American University (Arabic)
- Concord I (Tel: 5677420): Deep Impact
- Concord II (Tel: 5677420): Bodyguard

Teddy Ruxpin
3:30—Halfway Across The Galaxy & Turn Left
4:30—Masters Of The Maze
5:00—French Program
6:15—Wind At My Back
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Program
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—(2 Point 4Children)
8:00—Envy Special
8:50—N.Y.P.D.
9:30—Great Moments Of Science & Technology
9:40—Faces & Places
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Chicago Hope
11:15—The Album Show

THURSDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Superman (Cartoon)
3:30—Space Precinct (Sci-fi)
4:20—The Science Show
5:00—French Program
6:15—Sparks
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog.
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Family Matters
8:00—Museums of The World (Doc)
8:30—Dr Quinn—The Medicine Woman (Drama)
9:10—Oprah Winfrey Show
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Film:
12:00—Daddy (Comedy)

FRIDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Moby Dick (Cart.)
3:30—Treasure Hunt
4:00—French Film
6:25—The Simpsons
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog.
7:30—News Headlines

7:35—Fresh Prince of Bel Air
8:00—Cinema, Cinema
8:30—Babylon 5
9:10—Ancient-voices
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—The X Files (Drama)
11:15—The Halifax

PROGRAMMES EN FRAN AIS

SAMEDI

17:00—Fant pas rêver
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine
L'œuf de Colomb

DIMANCHE

18:00—Bonne espérance
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E-M6

LUNDI

17:00—Thalassa
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine scientifique

MARDI

18:00—Les cœurs brûlés
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Fractales

MERCREDI

17:00—Ushnala
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E-M6
20:00—Envoyé spécial

JEUDI

16:00—L'école des fans
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine
L'œuf de Colomb

VENDREDI

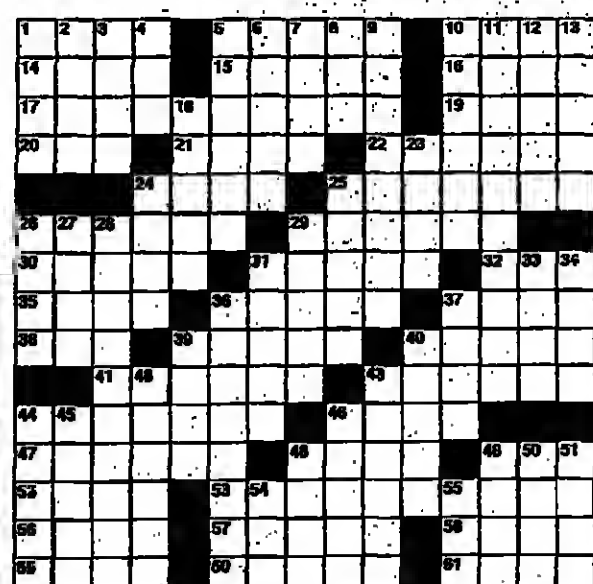
18:15—Fort Boyard
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Ad6 la Terre

Programs are subject to change by JTV



Television personality Carmen Electra has married NBA star Dennis Rodman, according to a statement released by Rodman's publicist 17 November. The pair reportedly were married in Las Vegas last weekend. Electra is shown at the MTV Movie Award ceremony 30 May, 1998.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS
1 Long or queen
5 Sodite
10 Aspen conveyance
14 Hush
15 Type of fly
16 Theatrical
17 Comedienne at the Apollo Theatre
19 Army go.
20 Buzzer
21 Sole
22 Spanish community
24 Location
25 Mail man?
26 Prayer aid
28 Chest rising
30 Stout
31 Blank
32 Big
35 Comic Kaplan
36 Easternware vessel
37 Twisted
38 They run on

DOWN
1 Honey or curry
2 Lotion ingredient
3 Foes
4 John
5 Pianos
6 Mesager
7 Temporarily put aside
8 Partner
9 de France
10 Diner
11 Hemic chieftain
12 Farming student
13 Helicopter assembly
16 Dancer
17 Shearer
23 River between China and Russia
24 Idealist

25 Baldwin and Waugh
26 Fad
27 Type of surgeon
28 Sentimental journalists
29 Inclined
30 Prudence
31 Otherwise
34 Went
35 Vegetable
37 Fast-rate
38 Rampant
40 Aborigine
42 Flow basket features
43 Stand
44 Composer
45 Publish
46 Western hill
48 Jacobite twin
49 Diving bird
50 Herd
51 of Phineas
54 Conquerors quest

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OFF THE WALL

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—This Week's— THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The sun is in Sagittarius. Soon, the moon will be in Capricorn. Capricorn is an educator, but teaches lessons through life experience.

Aries (March 21-April 19). Let an older person coach you and you could wind up becoming much more efficient. Hang around with your craziest friends, just for the excitement.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Your hopes and dreams seem almost within reach. Go ahead and let someone talk you into doing something you would not otherwise have dared.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Life can be kind of a challenge, while the sun's in Sagittarius. Going back instead of forward is your wisest move.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). One of your major problems is that you tend to think you're the only one who can do the job well. Get over that impulse by allowing a partner to help.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). You might have to work while you'd rather be playing. Why don't you just accept responsibility, and do the work that needs to be done?

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're very lucky in love, but it looks like you're supposed to be doing something else.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You'll want to entertain company, especially one person in particular. A fascinating conversation could lead to a forever commitment.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The moon is in Capricorn. Capricorn teaches you, usually through experience. You don't forget this kind of lesson.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Your ability to communicate about things that have gone on in the past is excellent, and you may even have a few amazing insights about those.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The moon is in your sign, giving you just the extra determination you need to tackle a big challenge.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You love doing stuff with other people, whether it be partying or having great conversations. All those things will be coming up for you.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Looks like you've got a challenging time ahead of you, but your friends are there to support you.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: Money is your theme this year, and you can make your dreams come true.

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Bridge

Silence is Golden

By Omar Sharif and Tannah Hirsch

Neither vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ 10 5
♥ 8 4 3 2
♦ A K Q J
♣ A 7 2

WEST EAST
♠ 7 3 2 ♠ Q 8 6 4
♥ K Q 6 ♥ 7
♦ 7 2 ♦ 10 9 6 5 4
♣ Q J 9 6 5 ♣ 10 8 3

SOUTH
♠ A K J 9
♥ A J 10 9 5
♦ 8 3
♣ K 4

The bidding:
South West North East
1♥ Pass 2♠ Pass
2♠ Pass 3♥ Pass
3♥ Pass 4♠ Pass
4♠ Pass 5♥ Pass
6♥ Dbl Pass Pass
GNT Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Queen of ♠

It is easy to talk too much at the bridge table. West said one word more than necessary on this deal from a tournament in Poland, and the result was expensive.

North-South were playing two-over-one responses as a game force.

hence three hearts showed a good hand with slam interest — four hearts would have been a sign-off. A series of cue-bids followed, in the course of which South denied a diamond control. The raise to five hearts was invitational, and South accepted on the strength of the king of clubs and strong heart intermediates. West could not resist the fatal error of doubling, which not only chased North-South to a better spot but also pointed the way to fulfilling the slam.

Had South been allowed to play six hearts, that slam would have failed by a trick. Against six no trump, West led a club, won in the closed hand. Since the location of the king-queen of hearts was marked by the double, South crossed to dummy with a diamond and led the ten of spades, covered by the queen. Declarer cleared the spades and diamonds, reducing all hands to four cards. West had to keep three hearts, else declarer would be able to cash ace of hearts and another, and both South and dummy came down to the same pattern.

Reading the position perfectly, declarer cashed the ace of clubs, removing West's last safe exit card. Now a heart to the ten ended played West, who was forced to return the suit into declarer's ace-jack tenace.

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Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

TOUHY
TOO
OVERP
BULJEM
HELBED

Answer here: THE

Jumbles: YOUTH PROVE JUMBLE BEHELD

Jumble: The graduating track star's biggest challenge



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: THE GRADUATING TRACK STAR'S BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Jumble: The graduating track star's biggest challenge

Words of Wisdom

Chase one hare at a time or both will elude you.

A key to understanding human nature is to know that everyone considers himself an exception to the rules.

If you deny rights to those you hate, those same rights eventually will be denied to those you love.

What lies before us is less important than what lies within us.

If you think you're too good for everything, you're probably good for nothing.

Don't borrow troubles or else they could become your possessions.

CHARIE



"... Trouble with you, Charlie, is you got no push. Take me—three more days and I got into the 'Guinness Book of Records'!"

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Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Éclaboussures

Voir Bagdad et mourir

Dans la Chambre basse du Parlement britannique, le discours du député travailliste anglais Georges Galloway, évoquant des "tuites" possibles venant de certains employés de l'UNSCOM, la commission mandatée par les Nations unies pour veiller au désarmement de l'Irak, a eu en son temps fait l'effet d'une bombe. Robin Cook, le ministre anglais des Affaires étrangères, avait bien tenté de minimiser la déclaration de son collègue travailliste, rappelant la politique à adopter envers l'Irak - lorsque celui-ci cesse sa coopération avec l'UNSCOM - il n'en reste pas moins que les déclarations de Galloway ont interpellé. Car elles laissent entendre que les accusations irakiennes sur l'éventuelle coopération entre l'UNSCOM et certains services secrets seraient bien fondées. D'ailleurs, l'Américain Scott Ritter en charge des inspections, qui clamait à qui veut l'entendre ses excellentes relations avec Israël et qui avait déclaré au quotidien israélien Haaretz tenir certaines de ses informations concernant l'armement irakien de source israélienne, n'avait-il pas démissionné devant le refus des États-Unis, en février dernier, de faire arriver à leur terme les menaces de frapper une seconde fois l'Irak?

Combien d'années d'inspection et d'embargo faudra-t-il pour être enfin sûr que l'Irak ne possède plus d'armes de destruction massive? Plus de sept ans? Rappelons que chaque mois, cinq à six mille enfants meurent dans ce qui reste des hôpitaux irakiens, faute de soins les plus élémentaires. Un rapide calcul: sept fois dix mille égale cent mille quatre. Et quatre vingt quatre fois cent mille font quatre cent vingt mille. L'unité considérée étant le cadavre d'enfant irakien.

De plus, dans sa déclaration, Galloway avait également tenu à rappeler que ni l'Allemagne, ni le Japon, que les États-Unis avaient eu bien plus de peine à vaincre, n'avaient subi, en 1945, pareille période d'inspection. Il y a quelques mois le député travailliste, qui s'était rendu en Irak, s'était illustré par la décision d'emmener en Angleterre une enfant irakienne atteinte de leucémie afin qu'elle puisse y trouver des soins adéquats.

De plus, les États-Unis ne peuvent stratégiquement pas laisser Saddam Hussein mettre de l'eau dans son vin, car cela créerait un regroupement des pays arabes, ce qui n'est pas profitable à la politique israélienne. Il faut à tout prix maintenir la situation de paria de l'Irak pour garder au monde arabe divisé et fragile. Au prix de la souffrance du peuple irakien. ■ Y.A.S.

Vous voulez écrire en français ?
Alors n'hésitez pas à collaborer à la rédaction du Jourdain. Que vous soyez passionné de politique, d'économie, de société, vos articles nous intéressent!

Stéphane Foucart
5664153

Dès maintenant, vous pouvez vous abonner gratuitement à la liste de diffusion par Internet du Jourdain. Au programme, la chronique ammanite de notre collaborateur George Weibdeh et les critiques des films à l'affiche. Pour vous inscrire, adressez tout simplement un courrier électronique à : le-jourdain@eudoraimail.com. Vous recevrez directement dans votre boîte aux lettres les rubriques en question.

Société

Le "mysiar", un mariage très controversé

Le "mysiar", ou "mariage de passage" est une institution sociale propre à certains pays islamiques. Légalement il s'agit d'un mariage comme un autre, ce qui place de fait les époux dans une situation de non-droit. Car loin de pouvoir être comparé à un mariage traditionnel, ce type d'union relève d'un contrat tacite entre les époux: celui de garder le silence.

Dans un pays comme la Jordanie où les relations entre les deux sexes sont quelque peu austères, et où l'on convoie à la première occasion, il existe un type d'union bien moins romanesque que l'idée convenue du mariage. Le "mariage de passage", ou "mysiar" en arabe, est une forme d'union qui officialise clairement les relations entre un homme et une femme, mais dont le contrat ne stipule nullement un engagement ou une vie commune. La liaison se limite en effet aux quelques heures de "visites" que l'homme rend en général à son "épouse", d'où le nom "mariage de passage".

Aucun cadre législatif. Toutefois, le "mysiar" ne rentre dans aucun cadre législatif, et le contrat signé par les époux est strictement le même que lors d'un mariage traditionnel. Le juge n'a en effet pas à demander aux époux s'il comptent vivre sous le même toit, s'il comptent fonder une famille, etc. «Dans la loi il n'y a rien qui interdise explicitement ce type d'union», explique Nour Imam, avocate et membre de l'Union des femmes jordaniennes (UJF). Si les deux mariés sont d'accord et signent un contrat de mariage, rien de peut empêcher le "mysiar". La seule différence entre le "mysiar" et le mariage tradi-

tionnel est donc uniquement d'ordre social: l'union est tenue secrète et la famille n'est en général au courant de rien. Ainsi, il est contracté en général pour échapper à une certaine forme de pression sociale. Une veuve par exemple, qui ne veut

pas perdre la garde de ses enfants au profit de sa belle-famille en se remarquant officiellement, peut contracter un "mysiar" et garder secrète l'union qui la lie à son nouveau mari. De même, dans un environnement social qui considère

parfois la polygamie comme honteuse, un homme peut secrètement contracter un "mysiar" et échapper ainsi - tout en ayant plusieurs femmes - à l'opinion de son entourage. Une autre raison qui n'a pas ou peu cours en Jordanie, con-

Le mariage: universel mais pas unique

Si le mariage est une institution sociale universelle, il est loin de revêtir la même forme dans toutes les sociétés. Le "mysiar", s'il peut paraître étrange à certains, n'est donc que l'une des multiples formes d'union qui existent à travers le monde. Certaines sociétés pratiquent ainsi la polyandrie, qui est la possibilité pour une femme d'avoir simultanément plusieurs époux. Elle est beaucoup plus rare que la polygamie (couramment appelée à tort polygamie, cette dernière regroupant la polyandrie et la polygamie). Elle est attestée chez les Yanomamis du Venezuela, chez les Todas de l'Inde, et chez certains peuples d'Afrique orientale et du Tibet. Cette pratique adopte la plus souvent la forme d'une "polygamie fraternelle": plusieurs frères ont une même femme pour épouse.

Dans certaines sociétés, lors du décès d'une femme, le groupe auquel elle appartenait doit fournir une sœur en remplacement. C'est la coutume du "sororat". De

même, dans certains cas, la veuve est épousée par un frère cadet du mari, c'est le "lévirat". Il ne s'agit cependant pas en général d'un droit sexuel sur la veuve, mais plutôt de l'obligation pour le cadet d'entretenir les enfants et l'épouse de son frère aîné.

Un phénomène, plus étonnant encore, est le mariage "entre femmes", pratiqué dans quelques sociétés africaines (Yorubas, Nuers). Une femme stérile peut, par son travail, rémunérer le montant d'une compensation matrimoniale qui lui permet d'épouser une autre femme. Elle devient ainsi le "père" social des enfants mis au monde par son "épouse" et engendrés par l'amant de celle-ci. Comme on le voit, chaque société possède ses codes sociaux et dispose d'un "mariage" qui lui convient du point de vue d'une certaine forme d'équilibre qui du point de vue de l'utilité économique ou sociale.

E. Jourdain

Economie

L'entente euro-jordanienne

Plus grande ouverture sur les marchés extérieurs, consolidation des finances, recherche de la stabilité monétaire. La Jordanie a fixé ses options économiques et a signé avec l'Union européenne des accords de partenariat dont le volet commercial parrainera en quelque sorte l'entrée du Royaume Hachémite dans le marché global.

Dans son vaste programme de reconstruction, l'économie jordanienne devrait bénéficier des bons auspices de l'Union européenne. En effet, des accords de partenariat, signés le 24 novembre 1997 par le régent, le Prince Hassan, et la Commission européenne sont en ce moment présentés au Parlement par le Ministère du plan, et doivent être ratifiés incessamment, dans l'attente de leur prochaine application. Ces projets vont de pair avec la volonté de la Banque centrale de renforcer les positions financières des banques nationales afin d'améliorer leur compétitivité au niveau international. De même, ils peuvent être rapprochés de la préparation à l'adhésion à l'Organisation mondiale du commerce, saint des saints du libéralisme planétaire, et passage obligé de qui veut ouvrir son marché à l'international.

Une zone franche euro-jordanienne

Ces accords prévoient notamment l'établissement d'une zone franche euro-jordanienne, et devraient accélérer le virage libéral que prend l'économie jordanienne. Vu les relations historiques étroites entre le Moyen Orient et l'Europe, cette dernière veut élargir son rôle hors de ses limites géographiques afin d'établir un climat de stabilité autant économique que politique dans la région. Mais c'est également pour élar-

gir le rayon d'action des entreprises du vieux continent que l'Union européenne a tenu à signer ces accords. Il s'agit ainsi de "munir d'un cadre approprié les différentes législations" en vue de faciliter le dialogue politique mais aussi les échanges commerciaux. Les accords stipulent donc le droit d'entreprendre pour des sociétés européennes en Jordanie et pour des sociétés jordanienes en Europe, et ce dans les domaines de la prestation de services, et du commerce de produits agricoles et industriels. Les échanges de capitaux, devraient être facilités, et des dispositions permettant à des entreprises européennes de s'aventurer sans trop de risques

sur le sol jordanien devraient être mises en place. Les notions de propriété intellectuelle et de propriété commerciale de valeur donc voir le jour, sous peu, dans le Royaume Hachémite. Dans la même veine, les normes existantes en Europe dans tous ces domaines, devraient être prolongées en Jordanie, pour éviter toute concurrence déloyale.

La zone franche euro-jordanienne, quant à elle, devrait voir le jour au terme d'une période de transition de douze ans, conformément aux clauses prévues par le GATT et le GATS. Afin d'aider les pays du bassin méditerranéen signataires, comme la Jordanie, à établir cette zone franche,

Trois questions à Marwan Al-Faury, chef d'entreprise (Soft-Jordanie)

Quel est le rôle du secteur privé jordanien dans le développement? Le secteur privé joue un rôle important dans le développement économique jordanien. Le secteur public, réputé pour sa négligence, sa bureaucratie trop lourde, et la corruption dans laquelle il est enfoncé, ne peut à lui seul faire redémarrer les rouages de l'économie. La tendance, à l'heure actuelle, à la privatisation, montre une réelle volonté de faire repartir l'économie.

Le secteur privé est-il partie prenante dans les décisions prises par la Banque Centrale concernant les options économiques?

Le Conseil d'administration de la Banque Centrale contient quelques représentants du patronat, nous y avons donc

quelques influences. Mais, ce ne sont que de faibles influences, et parfois, la Banque Centrale prend des décisions que le secteur privé estime comme manquant de prévoyance.

A ce propos, que pensez-vous de la fixation du taux de change du dinar contre le dollar?

La Jordanie ne possède pas suffisamment de ressources, comme des matières premières, du pétrole, etc., pour établir une économie forte. La Banque Centrale se trouve en quelque sorte obligée de fixer cette parité. Mais à mon avis, il faut toujours avoir un taux flottant fixé selon les lois de l'offre et de la demande.

Propos recueillis par Imad Salah

Crève-la-faim

Les vagabonds du rail, un roman américain de Jack London (1907). En prêt au Centre culturel français.

En 1894, la seconde grande crise économique de leur histoire frappe les États-Unis: à l'instar d'un quart des américains, Jack London est au chômage. Il rejoint une "armée" de cent mille chômeurs californiens déguenillés et affamés qui, emmenés par le "général" Coxey, se rendent au siège du Gouvernement fédéral, à Washington, réclamer une vaste politique de travaux publics. C'est cette "aventure de la faim" que Jack London relate dans *Les vagabonds du rail*, récit qui évoque avec légèreté et un certain détachement (enot, j'étais là pour l'aventure), les maux, les lectures, et les exercices de mendicité occasionnés par ce vagabondage entre les deux côtes. Il signe, avec *Les vagabonds du rail*, l'un de ses premiers romans sociaux, et l'une de ses premières œuvres réellement porteuses de ses convictions politiques. Car London s'envisage plus comme un essayiste socialiste désintéressé, et plus généralement comme un écrivain engagé, que comme un simple romancier. Ses ouvrages comme les fameux *Croc-Blanc* (1906) et *L'appel de la forêt* (1903), si leur succès auprès du public reste rarement égalé jusqu'à nos jours, ne représentent pour l'auteur lui-même qu'un simple exercice alimentaire destiné à lui permettre de rembourser les nombreuses dettes qu'il contracte continuellement. Roman engagé, *Les vagabonds du rail* ne peut toutefois être comparé au *Talon de fer*, que London rédige l'année suivante. Ce roman qui met en scène, dans un futur lointain, un groupement de révolutionnaires marxistes luttant contre un Etat que plusieurs siècles de capitalisme ont changé en régime fasciste, relève en effet de la propagande pure et simple et sacrifie une grande part de la trame narrative du texte, à l'exposé en extenso des théories marxistes. Les vagabonds du rail, au contraire, est construit comme un récit d'aventure, même s'il garde un fond idéologique marqué.



Jack London, aventurier, journaliste et écrivain engagé.

C'est dans la jeunesse de London qu'il faut chercher les sources, aussi bien de son immense proximité littéraire que de sa révolte précoce face au capitalisme américain. Né dans les quartiers ouvriers de San Francisco, il fait un apprentissage prématuré de la misère et des menus travaux. A dix ans, il vend des journaux dans la rue avant d'aller à l'école; à quinze, il est employé douze heures par jour dans une conserverie et, s'il a définitivement quitté la "Grammar School", il n'en reste pas moins un lecteur autodidacte et acharné. De cette époque jusqu'à l'année 1900 - où il parvient enfin à vivre de sa plume avec la publication de son premier recueil *Le fils du loip* -, il exerce un nombre incalculable de petits métiers. Balayeur de jardins publics, musicien, agriculteur, éleveur de poulets, pillier de parcs ostréicoles dans la baie de San Francisco, puis parolleur maritime dans les mêmes eaux, autant de tâches dans lesquelles il puisera plus tard l'inspiration de la plupart de ses romans "sociaux", dont *Les vagabonds du rail* est l'une des illustrations les plus réussies. ■

Le Jourdain



Le mariage traditionnel oriental est réputé pour les festivités qui l'accompagnent. Le "mysiar", quant à lui, ne s'annonce pas et doit rester, autant que possible, secret.

de la semaine
ARTISTE

«Il y a un lien harmonique, le joint, harmonie, le char de guerre, qui trouve son pendant morphologique dans le latin arma, mais aussi dans l'aspect significatif qui convient, qui s'adapte. C'est à l'origine la cheville, le joint, dans une charpente, d'où aussi charpente. Mais si on parle d'une lyre, harmonique, d'un ensemble des cordes. En théorie musicale, ce mot fait référence au musical, le mode. Un autre suffixe -logie, -logie, s'ajoute. Nous le trouvons en français dans la musique, la peinture, la sculpture, la littérature, la médecine. Ainsi que dans le langage. Le mot est également utilisé dans le langage. A l'origine, l'art consiste en l'harmonisation de divers éléments. Vocabulaire d'Alfred Jarry.

Harmonie, arme, une analogie tout de même étrange.

C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman
Cinéma

Cycle Les années 80.

Trois hommes et un couffin, un film de Coline Serreau (1986), couleur, 100', avec A. Dussolier, M. Baugnot, R. Girard. Trois célibataires endurcis qui partagent un appartement deviennent les "parains" d'un bébé abandonné devant leur porte. Séances au Centre culturel français le lundi 23 novembre à 18h30 et 20h30.

Exposition

Peinture abstraite par un jeune artiste jordanien, Mohammad Abu Aziz. Expo. du 7 au 28 novembre au Centre culturel français.

Société

La malnutrition entre à l'école

De plus en plus d'écoliers et de collégiens souffrent de malnutrition ou de sous-nutrition. Conscient de l'ampleur du problème, le Ministère de l'éducation mène actuellement une vaste enquête dans les régions les plus pauvres pour mesurer l'importance du fléau. Des initiatives privées, dans l'immédiat, devraient être sollicitées.

«Nous savons que le problème existe, mais nous attendons plus de données, explique un conseiller du ministère de la santé. A cette fin, pour sûr, le ministère de l'éducation et de l'enseignement réalise une vaste enquête sur le sujet. Le sujet? Des enfants qui arrivent à l'école le ventre vide et qui, anémiques, ne peuvent suivre les cours correctement. Dans tous les ministères concernés, Affaires sociales, Santé, Education, on a pleine conscience qu'un nombre important d'écoliers, ainsi que de collégiens, a faim.

Du thé et du pain.

Il n'est en effet pas rare, dans les villes du sud du pays de voir arriver devant les grilles de l'école, des enfants en avance d'une demi-heure, sans avoir rien mangé le matin. De plus, beaucoup de cantines scolaires sont désertées du fait que certaines familles n'ont plus de quoi régler la facture à la fin du mois. Ces enfants se contentent souvent d'un morceau de pain en guise de repas. Certains enseignants s'en inquiètent et jugent la situation pour le moins préoccupante. En général, ce sont eux qui donnent l'alerte, aux services sociaux des dé-



Des enfants qui arrivent à l'école le ventre vide et qui, anémiques, ne peuvent suivre les cours correctement.

partement régionaux de l'éducation et de l'enseignement. Cette année, une étude régionale, centrée sur la vallée du Jourdain, dans le sud du pays, a montré qu'environ 22% des écoliers de cette région souffrent d'anémie pendant les cours car ils quit-

tent leur maison le matin sans manger de nourriture calorifique. Le plus souvent du thé et du pain. Devant une telle situation, les impayés des cantines scolaires sont examinés au cas par cas, et certaines familles sont parfois totalement prises en charge. A

Ma'an, dans le sud de la Jordanie, l'Association humanitaire a demandé à ses services d'aider quelques familles financièrement pour que leurs enfants ne souffrent pas de carences alimentaires. Dans la vallée du Jourdain et dans le

nord du pays, la même politique est pratiquée. Un riche Jordanien a d'ailleurs reçu un prix du Ministère de l'éducation pour avoir offert des repas gratuits à tous les écoliers de l'unique école d'un petit village du sud du pays. Ayant remarqué que ce repas est parfois le seul de la journée, il a tenu à ce que ce repas soit d'une haute qualité nutritionnelle, et les services sociaux des départements de l'éducation et de l'enseignement ne devraient pas tarder à lui emboîter le pas.

Un taux comparable au taux de chômage

Ces derniers lancent en effet dans le sud, une grande campagne pour prévenir les risques de malnutrition et de sous-nutrition dont ils jugent le taux comparable à celui du chômage. Ce sont souvent les enfants de 11-12 ans qui sont le plus touchés. Mais pour combattre ce mal grandissant, le Ministère de l'éducation nationale a besoin de fonds spéciaux qui ne sont pas explicitement inclus dans son budget. Ses moyens sont donc limités pour réaliser pleinement une campagne à la mesure du fléau. Certains députés ont proposé au gouvernement des solutions



Tous les écoliers ne sont bien entendus pas logés à la même enseigne. Ici, la sortie des cours d'une école privée d'Amman.

qui, sur le papier, semblent efficaces. Par exemple, commencer la journée par des distributions de biscuits et de lait dans les écoles des régions les plus pauvres. Mais là encore, le gouvernement ne peut se permettre financièrement de se lancer de vastes campagnes d'assistance alimentaire: pas de fonds destinés à cet effet. Des appels ont donc été lancés pour voir des initiatives comme celles de ce riche Jordanien se reproduire, car il semble que l'initiative privée soit une solution non négligeable, en attendant que le gouvernement trouve un moyen durable et

constant de lutter contre le phénomène. Cependant, certains députés ne croient pas à la réalité de ce phénomène de paupérisation qui amène aux problèmes de malnutrition dans les écoles. Selon eux, ceux qui ne paient pas les cantines scolaires, et ne peuvent nourrir correctement leurs enfants, dépensent en réalité leurs allocations familiales autrement. Pour l'un de ces députés «le gouvernement ne peut couvrir les besoins alimentaires de tous les écoliers en difficulté. Le problème, continu-t-il, est qu'aujourd'hui les jeunes préfèrent le Mac-

Donald's.» Selon lui, trouver quelques dinars pour acheter le minimum nécessaire à une alimentation correcte est la portée de tout le monde. Il reste que dans certaines régions d'éducation prioritaire comme la vallée du Jourdain et plus généralement comme le sud du pays, beaucoup de familles n'ont plus, une fois les charges payées, que très peu d'argent par jour et par personne, pour se nourrir... ■

Youssef Abu Saleh

Société

Le droit des femmes à disposer d'elles-mêmes

Une nouvelle loi, autorisant les jordaniennes à sortir seules du territoire sans l'accord de leur époux laisse penser que la situation de la femme se débloque peu à peu dans le Royaume Hachémite.

Dernièrement, une loi vient de rendre à la femme jordanienne une part de la liberté qui lui est due. Désormais, une femme peut voyager seule sans avoir à demander d'autorisation à son mari ou à l'homme de la famille qui le remplace (père, frère, oncle, cousin, etc.). De plus, elle a maintenant le droit de faire sortir du territoire son enfant, si elle est veuve ou divorcée, et de l'inscrire sur son passeport. La société jordanienne serait-elle en train de reconsidérer sa position face à la situation des femmes? Récemment encore, une conférence a été donnée par la princesse Sarvat Al-Hassan autour du thème de la place de la femme dans l'Islam. C'est surtout son rôle

dans l'Islam des débats qui a été évoqué, rappelant son importance tant au niveau économique, social, politique et même religieux. Sarvat Al-Hassan a également insisté sur le fait que l'égalité entre hommes et femmes est un précepte fondateur de la religion musulmane, et qu'il fallait abolir l'idée fausse que l'on se fait de cette religion tout autour du monde.

Importance économique

De plus, il a été souligné que pour que la femme puisse aider au développement du pays, il était vital d'améliorer sans tarder ses conditions de travail, ain-



La princesse Sarvat Al-Hassan, figure de l'engagement pour la reconnaissance des droits de la femme.

si que de mettre plus en valeur son importance économique, ce qui contribuera à créer les conditions d'une réelle égalité entre hommes et femmes, puisque ces dernières seront alors économiquement indépendantes. Dans ce domaine également, les initiatives ne manquent pas. L'association Nour Al-Hussein a ainsi ouvert, en partenariat avec d'autres associations (voir le portrait de Mouyassar Al-Sadi dans Le Jourdain de la semaine der-

Blocages et aberrations

Il reste cependant dans la société jordanienne des blocages et des aberrations de la législation qui entravent de fait une égalité entre les deux sexes.

Ainsi, la Sécurité sociale mise en place en 1980 comporte encore des dispositions injustes, voire discriminatoires. Par exemple, si une femme vient à mourir avant l'âge de la retraite, son enfant ne bénéficie pas des ses droits, ce qui n'est pas vrai en ce qui concerne le père. Mais là encore, on parle de changements dans la législation.

Les femmes ont également du mal à se faire une place dans le monde politique, ce qui n'est toutefois pas une particularité jordanienne. Les trois femmes qui siègent actuellement au Sénat n'ont pas été élues mais directement nommées par le roi. En 1989, lors des premières élections parlementaires, une femme, Toujan Faysal a été toutefois élue, mais a depuis perdu son siège. Dotée d'une forte personnalité et d'une franchise à toute épreuve, elle a en quelque sorte heurté le machisme oriental et a sans doute malheureusement empêché l'élection de plusieurs femmes qui se sont plus tard présentées aux élections. Cet événement faisait suite à une déclaration commune du roi Hussein et de la reine Noor, enjoignant la société jordanienne à laisser «la bride sur le cou» aux femmes jordaniennes, et à les laisser choisir leur voie elles-mêmes. Au cours de ce discours, le roi Hussein et son épouse avaient également souligné que «la Jordanie trouve dans ses femmes de grandes capacités de don de soi et une grande énergie inventive».

Cependant, si les femmes occupent aujourd'hui des positions auxquelles elles ne pouvaient même pas songer voilà quelques années (dans la police, dans l'armée, dans la magistrature, etc.), il n'en reste pas moins qu'elles n'ont pas aujourd'hui de réelle liberté dans la société, la plupart d'entre elles croulant sous le poids de l'ignorance et de la dépendance sociale. Et ce n'est apparemment ni le fait de l'Islam, ni le fait du pouvoir, mais sans doute celui de l'incertitude de la société orientale... ■

Sonia Qatami

Le Proche Orient dans la presse française
Saddam Hussein à l'honneur

«Saddam Hussein aime jouer avec le feu, même à s'y brûler, et quitte à embarrasser et à décourager ceux qui voudraient lui venir en aide», telle est l'opinion de Jacques Amalric vis à vis du président irakien, dans son éditorial du 13 novembre intitulé «Incorrigible», et publié dans Libération. Il rappelle que face aux multiples efforts diplomatiques lors de la crise de janvier, le schéma s'est une fois de plus reproduit aujourd'hui. Force est de constater que «Saddam Hussein est resté ce qu'il était: l'homme du tout ou rien, du risque-tout et du fait accompli, aussi incorrigible que prévisible, celui dont la parole n'engage que ceux qui ont le tort d'y croire et qui se soucie du sort de son peuple comme d'une guigne».

Le 31 octobre, l'Irak a en effet annoncé sa décision de «rompre la coopération» avec les inspecteurs de l'ONU chargés du désarmement. Un défi «mesuré» par le Président irakien, puisqu'il a pris la responsabilité d'une nouvelle confrontation qui aurait pu dégénérer en conflit militaire. Au cours des deux dernières semaines, l'atmosphère entre l'Irak et l'ONU a été très tendue et marquée par la détermination des Etats-Unis de se servir de frappes aériennes contre l'Irak. Mais Saddam Hussein a paré le coup. La semaine dernière, il a choisi de faire marche arrière et de reprendre de façon inconditionnelle la coopération avec la commission de l'ONU. La presse française ne s'est pas gardée de convier l'affaire. Dans un article intitulé «Comment on est arrivé là», Libération, le 13 novembre indique les dates clés de la crise depuis 1991 et analyse les stratégies de l'Irak et des Etats-Unis ainsi que l'attitude du monde arabe. Le défi de l'Irak est basé sur le fait que l'attitude conciliante de Bagdad au lendemain de l'accord (de février) ne lui a strictement rien rapporté en terme de levée de sanctions. Convaincu qu'il va rester éternellement soumis à un embargo qui dure depuis déjà sept ans, et que «le bouc du tunnel» n'est pas proche, le dirigeant irakien se dit qu'à ce prix autant se passer de la tuelle humiliante des inspecteurs de l'ONU. Saddam Hussein espère peut-être un dénouement surprise avant les frappes américaines, comme en février, mais il ne donne guère de grain à moudre à ceux qui ne souhaitent pas cette crise. Et il a sans doute mal jugé du redressement politique de Clinton. L'objectif de Washington, poursuit le quotidien, est «la stratégie suivie jusqu'à présent - «convaincre Saddam dans sa botte» par l'effet combiné des sanctions et du contrôle ouvrier - n'est plus viable». La nouvelle stratégie américaine donc selon l'article «vise à abattre Saddam». «Des bombardements prolongés auraient pour effet d'affaiblir la dictature et de préparer le terrain à une hypothétique prise du pouvoir par des opposants. Mais avec deux réserves: Clinton veut préserver un minimum de cohésion dans la «coalition» issue de la guerre du Golfe; et les Etats-Unis estiment qu'un



éclatement de l'Irak serait encore plus dangereux pour le Moyen Orient que le maintien d'un Saddam à la puissance militaire affaiblie». Quant au monde arabe, Libération précise que «partagés entre leur manque d'enthousiasme pour une action américaine et leur peu d'amour pour Saddam, ils ont infléchi leur position et ne suivront sans doute pas l'appel irakien à violer l'embargo».

A ce sujet, Le Monde, samedi 14 novembre, publie un article affirmant que «le comportement de l'Irak laisse (les Etats-Unis) cois, et que ces derniers ont trouvé le moyen de leur faire avaler la couleuvre. Les pays arabes se retrouvent aujourd'hui dans une position plus délicate qu'elle ne l'était lors de la crise de janvier-février 1998 entre Bagdad et les Nations Unies. Et si huit ans d'expérience leur ont appris à ne pas croire à l'efficacité d'un recours à la force contre Bagdad, ils peuvent difficilement s'y opposer, étant donné l'obstination du régime irakien».

Le processus de paix israélo-palestinien était l'autre façade de l'actualité proche orientale traitée par la presse française. Il s'agit cette fois-ci du projet d'agrandissement de la colonie juive «Har Homa» à Jérusalem-est, lancé par le premier Ministre israélien. Sous le titre «une nouvelle colonie juive en travers de l'accord de Wye», l'article que publie Libération le 13 novembre, explique qu'en privilégiant cette direction, «Netanyahu engage une nouvelle épreuve de force avec les Palestiniens», et que l'accord de Wye Plantation du 23 octobre «avait même été appliqué, o du plomb dans l'œil... les ministres israéliens l'ont approuvé du bout des lèvres». Le quotidien ajoute que «les travaux devraient débuter prochainement» et que «pour le Premier ministre, un pas en avant semble s'accompagner invariablement de deux pas en arrière».

Nahed Al Khlouf

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Al Ahli (Egypt) and Mawloodah (Algeria) are Arab Handball Champions

Edited by Abdul Hamid Adhisi

Al Ahli (Egypt) and Mawloodah (Algeria) are Arab Handball Champions

By Abdul Hamid Adhisi
Special to The Star

HRH PRINCESS Samiah bint Al Hassan, the Honorary President of the Jordanian Handball Federation, patronized the closing ceremonies of the 20th Arab Mens Handball Championship and the 2nd Women's Handball Championship.

In the mens competition, Egypt's Al Ahli took the title after their 33-26 victory over Al Ahli from Jordan in the final match of the tournament, held at the Sports City. The match was attended by 4,000 spectators, many from the large Egyptian community in Jordan.

Egypt's Al Ahli finished the tournament with 11 points, following their five victories and one draw. Jordan's Al Ahli—who needed to win the match to clinch the title—suffered from nerves and tired legs, and were faced with an experienced Egyptian team, playing in front of thousands of their spectators.

Jordan's Al Ahli eventually



finished in fourth place because of their poor goal difference. Second place went to Saudi's Al Ahli, after they beat Qatar's Qatar 24-23. The latter ended up in third place.

In the women's competition, Algeria's Al Mawloodah ended the hopes of Tunisia's Al Sahel when they drew 21-21. The Algerian club retained the title for the second year running, and once again it was the goal difference that

proved vital. Tunisia's Al Sahel missed the chance for victory when they failed to score from a penalty shot with five seconds of the match remaining.

Egypt's Smoha and Al Ahli were third and fourth respectively. Syria's Al Itihad took fifth place, and Jordan's Al Qthodori and Hartha ended up in sixth and last place respectively.

Pan-Arab Games update

Syria to participate in Pan Arab Games HRH Prince Abdullah bin Al Hussein, President of the Higher Organizing Committee for the upcoming 9th Pan Arab Games, received an official Syrian letter of participation.

The Syrian delegation will participate in 22 of the men competitions, and in 15 of the women competitions. There will be Syrian participation in the Polo, Bridge, Equestrian and Fencing competitions.

Athletes go to Qatar The team includes Fakher Al Din Fouad (High Jump), Tareq Al Najjar (Pole Vault and Discus), and Mohammed Abdul Baqi (Long and Triple Jump). Jordan's athletes took part in a tournament in Iraq recently, and performed well by all accounts.

Karate team is up for the challenge Jordan's Mens Karate team concluded their

training camp in Greece this week. The Jordan team trained with Greek team, and the experience should serve as good preparation for a friendly tournament due to start in Cyprus this week. Four countries are expected to participate in the forthcoming tournament, which will include Jordan, Lebanon, Cyprus and Greece. The Jordanian Mens Karate team are preparing for the next big challenge—the Asian Games, to be held in Bangkok next month.

Saudi donation to the Jordanian Football Association

The Abdullah Al Shatari Corporation, from Saudi Arabia, donated fitness equipment (valued at JD 22,000) to the Jordanian Football Association (JFA). HRH Prince Abdullah, President of the JFA, accepted the donation, and said that it would be used to prepare the national team for the forthcoming competitions.

Abu Al Saeed will be greatly missed

AMMAN (The Star)—All sport lovers in Jordan were shocked by the death on Friday of Mr Nazme Al Saeed, the President of the Sports Journalists Association and the head of the Sports Department at Al Rai daily.

Al Saeed excelled as a goalkeeper during the 1950's, in both football and basketball, and played basketball for Al Ahli. His talents enabled him to participate in the first Pan Arab Games, held in Alexandria in 1953.

His CV was legendary. He obtained a BSc in Physical Edu-



cation from Egypt in 1956, before taking up the Head of the Sports Department at Radio Jordan.

In the 1970s, he started

committees as well. The Star will greatly miss Abu Al Saeed, and we pray to God that the deceased may rest to peace.

Kuwait victorious in Khaleeji 14

By Abdul Hamid Adhisi
Special to The Star

KUWAIT'S REMARKABLE 4-1 victory over UAE enabled them to retain the Khaleeji title they won two years ago. The Kuwait victory gave them first place, after the title favorites—Saudi Arabia—managed only a goal-less draw against Qatar.

From the very start of the match, you could see that the Kuwait team were determined to defend their title. They absorbed an enthusiastic Emirates team, and then counter-attacked with a shot in the 18th minute—Bashar Abdullah narrowly missing after a mistake from UAE keeper Mohsen Mosabbah.

Kuwait's first goal was not very long away, as two minutes later, Abdul Rahman Ibrahim, the UAE defender, tumbled Bashir Abdullah in the penalty box. Bader Hiji gratefully stepped up and scored from the penalty spot in the 20th minute.

Three minutes later, the UAE suffered another blow, when their striker, Adel Matar, was given the red card by Marten, the

French referee. This inspired the Kuwait team to look for a second goal before half time, and it duly came from a move involving Bashir Abdullah and Jassem Hurwadi, before Issam Sleen thundered an unstoppable shot into the Emirates' net.

In the second half, the UAE came out determined to save the game, and hope was restored when Hassan Suhail scored with a header from a corner kick in the 53rd minute.

However, Kuwait's man of the match—striker Jassem Hurwadi—ruined the UAE fight back when he scored two goals in the 65 and 70 minutes. His goals secured the Khaleeji trophy for Kuwait, and placed him as the top goal-scorer in the tournament.

Fifteen minutes from the end, UAE's Kojak impersonator, Mohammed Ali, failed to restore some pride to the UAE, when the Kuwaiti Keeper Ahmad Jassem saved his penalty shot.

From that moment onwards, the crowd knew that the Khaleeji 14 champions would be Kuwait. Brave Oman take fourth place Oman's 2-2 draw with Bah-



rain, the hosts, gave them fourth place in the Khaleeji 14. This was a vast improvement from team that normally finishes in last place. The result meant that Bahrain took fifth place, and Qatar were left in

bottom place. Khaleeji 14 awards During the closing ceremony, the following awards were handed out: Fair Play Trophy (Kuwait), Best Player

Trophy (Bader Hiji, Kuwait), Top Goal Scorer (Jassem Hurwadi, Kuwait), and Best Goalkeeper (Mohammed Ali Denia, Saudi Arabia).

Football Roundup

English Premier League match reports

Arsenal (0) Tottenham (0) Former Arsenal manager George Graham returned as boss of archrival Tottenham and was happy to escape with a point after his Norwegian goalkeeper Espen Baardsen denied the champions' repeated attacks.

Charlton Athletic (1) Middlesbrough (1)

A first-half penalty, awarded for a foul by Paul Gascoigne, allowed Charlton's Clive Mendonca to end his goal drought with his first in nine matches. Phil Stamp, who came on for Gascoigne, headed the 74th minute equalizer.

Chelsea (3) Wimbledon (0) Chelsea cruised to fourth, one ahead of Middlesbrough. Italian Gianfranco Zola opened the scoring in the 32nd and then ran to the bench to wave injured teammate Pierluigi Casciaghi's number-10 shirt at the fans. Uruguayan Gustavo Poyet and Romanian Dan Petrescu also scored.

Liverpool (1) Leeds United (3)

Frenchman Gerard Houllier's debut in sole charge of Liverpool was soured by three goals in seven minutes at Anfield. Robbie Fowler put the Reds in front with a 68th-minute penalty but teenage substitute Alan Smith equalized in the 79th and Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink grabbed two in the 80th and 86th.

Manchester United (3) Blackburn Rovers (2)

United moved should have done better after cruising 3-0 up against 10 men after Tim Sherwood was sent off in the 48th for elbowing David Beckham. Paul Scholes scored twice but United then allowed its concentration to slip.

Newcastle United (1) Sheffield Wednesday (1)

Norwegian Peter Rudi grabbed an equalizer 10 minutes from time after Paul Dalglish, the former manager's son, gave Newcastle a fourth-minute lead. Newcastle's England striker Alan Shearer went off at halftime with a suspected hamstring injury. The Czech Republic's Pavel Srnec made his debut with a goal for Wednesday against his former club. Curiously he had made his debut for Newcastle in 1991 against Wednesday.

Southampton (1) Aston Villa (4) Dion Dublin scored a hat-trick to get Villa off to the best league start in the club's history, unbeaten in 12 games. He headed in his first off a cross in the third minute, shot the second in the 56th and tapped in the third in the 85th.

West Ham United (3) Leicester City (2) Frank Lampard sent West Ham up 3-1 in the 76th minute and then gave away an own goal three minutes from time. Leicester's Muzzy Izzet, a boyhood West Ham fan, put his side ahead only for former Leicester player Paul Kilton to equalize.

French 1st Division match reports

Strasbourg (2) Lorient (0)

Lorient remain firmly rooted to the bottom of the table after Strasbourg won at home for only the second time this season with first-half goals by striker Lionel Rouxel and captain Corentin Martins.

Le Havre (0) Paris SG (3)

A long exchange between coach Artur Jorge and captain Marco Simone after Wednesday's 2-2 home draw with Metz appears to have done the trick as PSG found their finishing touch. They scored first-half goals through full backs Jimmy Almeria and Gregory Paisley and Simone. The Italian striker added his seventh goal of the season in the 70th minute.

O. Marseille (1) RC Lens (0)

Leaders Marseille were lucky to extend their unbeaten run to 14 games thanks to a goal from international striker Christophe Dugarry in the 31st minute. Champions Lens came very close to equalizing when striker Pascal Nouma hit the bar in the 50th minute

of a balanced game.

G. Bordeaux (0) Sochaux (0) Unimpressive Bordeaux were held to their first draw at home by lowly Sochaux. Bordeaux, without French championship leading scorer Sylvain Wilford for most of the match, were booed by fans as they left the pitch.

Rennes (0) O. Lyon (0)

The Brittany side tried nearly everything in a lackluster game but never found their way through a tight Lyon defense.

Bastia (3) Monaco (1)

Bastia's Polish striker Piotr Swierczewski blasted home a fine shot in the 17th minute of a match played in a heavy wind. Monaco's playmaker Ludovic Giuly equalized with a close range volley 13 minutes after the break, but Pierre-Yves Andre put Bastia back in the driving seat in the 67th.

Frederic Ne sealed the game with a third goal 16 minutes from time. The Corican side finished with 10 men after Patrick Valery was sent off for a second bookable offence in the 80th minute.

Montpellier (3) AJ Auxerre (0)

Center-forward Didier Thimothee hit a double to help Montpellier trounce AJ Auxerre in a one-sided match. Thimothee opened the scoring just before the break as Montpellier dominated from the start. Xavier Gravelaine put his side 2-0 up in the 62nd. Thimothee made it three with 12 minutes left.

Metz (1) Nantes (0)

Bruno Rodriguez handed Metz the three points by netting a 20-meter shot 10 minutes from time.

Toulouse (1) Nancy (1)

Veteran striker Tony Cascarino, allowed to play before joining Ireland on Euro 2000 duty, proved he is still far from retirement when he scored his seventh goal of the season and fourth in three games in the 61st minute. Toulouse's Portuguese captain Oceano equalized with a 25-meter free kick two minutes from time.

Italian 1st Division match reports

Bari (0) AC Milan (0)

Goalkeeper Francesco Mancini

showed why Bari have the second best defensive record in Serie A with a superb display that included successive pointblank saves from George Weah and Oliver Bierhoff in the 42nd minute and another reflex effort to deny Maurizio Ganz in the 53rd. When Weah finally got the ball past Mancini in the 66th, Bari were saved by the woodwork.

Empoli (2) Cagliari (1)

New signing Arturo Di Napoli took his tally to four goals in four matches since joining Empoli with a first half penalty and a 63rd minute second. Roberto Muzzi's seventh goal of the season came too late to rescue Cagliari from their fourth successive away defeat.

Inter Milan (3) Sampdoria (0)

Seven days after a controversial penalty cost Inter victory in the Milan derby, referee Alfredo Trentalange made amends by awarding two penalties to the hosts in the opening 17 minutes after fouls on Nicola Ventola and Xavier Zanetti. France's Youri Djorkaeff converted both, with Chile's Ivan Zamorano adding a third in the 80th minute to give Inter their first victory in five league matches.

Parma (4) Udinese (1)

Argentine Hernan Crespo resolved Parma's goal-scoring problems with a hat-trick that started in the third minute with a backheel off Enrico Chiesa's cross. Brazilian Marcio Amoroso levelled in the 35th before Crespo's 37th minute header and a 65th minute penalty handed the home side victory. Croatia Mario Stancic added a late fourth.

Piacenza (4) Fiorentina (2)

Piacenza, unbeaten at home since April, led through Massimo Rastelli in the 12th minute only for a dubious 23rd minute penalty from Rui Costa to level. Simone Inzaghi's 29th minute penalty briefly put Piacenza back in front before a foul on Jörg Henrich gave Fiorentina the chance to square the match 2-2 with a third penalty. Paolo Cristallini's 59th minute header put Piacenza ahead for good. Giampiero Piovani sealed victory in the last minute.

AS Roma (2) Juventus (0)

Two goals in the dying minutes of each half accounted for a Juventus side who have not won at Roma since 1991. Francesco Totti set up Paolo Sergio's 44th minute opener while Vincent Candela claimed a late second. Paolo Montero was sent off, Daniel Fonseca hit a post and Edgar Davids joined Juve's ever-lengthening injury list.

Saleritana (2) Perugia (0)

Marco Di Vito scored in the 56th and 90th minutes to clinch another three points in Salernitana's quest to avoid a quick return to Serie B.

Venezia (2) Lazio (0)

Brazilian Tuta's fourth minute goal was Venezia's first in their Sant'Elena stadium this season. Francesco Pedone added a second in the 39th to clinch victory for the first time since returning to Serie A. Lazio had Portugal's Fernando Couto sent off and have now been humbled by both bottom clubs in their last two away matches.

Vicenza (0) Bologna (4)

Bologna's Giuseppe Signori confirmed his return to form with a hat-trick. The former Italy striker, only recently back to full fitness, converted a 34th minute penalty. In the 66th, Davide Bellotti was sent off for a foul on Signori with the striker picking himself up to slot home the free kick. Five minutes later he completed his hat-trick with a superb volley. Igor Kolyvanov added a fourth.

German 1st Division results

VfL Wolfsburg (2) H. Berlin (1)
B. Leverkusen (3) Nuremberg (0)
B. Dortmund (3) Schalke 04 (0)
Hamburg SV (0) E. Frankfurt (1)
B. Munch (2) VfB Stuttgart (0)
MSV Duisburg (2) VfL Bochum (0)
W. Bremen (0) Kaiserslautern (1)
Hansa Rostock (1) B. M'gladbach (1)

Spanish 1st Division results

Athletic Bilbao (3) Oviedo (5)
Barcelona (4) Tenerife (1)
D. Coruna (2) Alaves (2)
Extremadura (1) Valencia (0)
R. Santander (4) Salamanca (1)
Valladolid (1) Mallorca (0)
Villarreal (2) A. Madrid (1)
R. Zaragoza (0) Espanol (3)
Real Madrid (1) Celta Vigo (2)

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THE STAR'S WORK COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

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Microsoft, ZakNet and Compaq join forces: Internet for small business, beamed from space!

MICROSOFT HAS joined forces with ZakNet and Compaq Computer to roll out a new high speed, satellite based, Internet service package for small to medium business users in the Middle East, based around the high speed Internet technologies being made available over the ZakSat satellite Internet platform. The agreement means that companies can gain easy access to high-speed Internet-on-demand services, as well as to streaming content selected from the world's leading Internet business content providers.

The ZakNet platform works by using satellite technology to send Internet data to users at speeds up to ten times that available from dial-up services. With ZakSat, users request data from the Internet via a traditional Internet service provider (ISP), but the data returns to them via satellite, at much higher speeds than users of the conventional services offered by most ISPs can typically expect.

Extending the potential of the ZakSat service to small business users, Microsoft's Small Business Server is a complete networking, messaging and information exchange solution.

Small Business Server includes file and print sharing, running business-critical applications, e-mail and scheduling and support for Internet and communications services, including Web, remote access, and fax. It's the ideal solution for

and is configured especially to give corporate-grade communications capabilities to small companies who do not have the dedicated technical resources which are usually required to



install, configure and support such advanced functions. ZakNet offers a service called 'ZakCast' streaming service. ZakCast allows users to select areas of interest to them, such as business news, world news or tracking of any number of stock tickers out of a selection of some 16,000 stocks.

That information is then 'streamed' down to users directly from the satellite, and stored in the users' computer where it can be accessed as locally held data. In cases where such information contains links to other websites, users can click on those links and be transferred instantly to the 'conventional' Web.

It is like having a com-

You have a resource of some 3 Gigabytes of the best, most useful and most relevant data on the Internet, maintained bang up to date at all times.

There are major benefits of this approach to business users, including reductions in connectivity costs and reduced time spent searching for, and connecting to, Web based information.

The information you need is there, held locally, instantly available. What's more, employees have total access to that information without the downsides of Web access, such as non-productive time spent browsing for information or even employee use of the Internet for social purposes. "It's a faster, more economical and more time-efficient way to access the very rich information held on the Internet today," Smith said. The ZakCast streaming data services will be launched, fully operational, in November 1998.



Internet retailing: Battle of the booksellers

By Richard Waters & John Labate
AMERICA'S BIGGEST book-seller has failed to beat Amazon.com, an upstart Internet rival, at its own game. So it has done what any self-respecting 800 pounds gorilla would do: change the rules.

Barnes & Noble's, at the end of last week, agreed to spend \$600 million on the United States' biggest book distributor, Ingram Books. This company's 11 warehouses create a ready-made platform for the flagging Barnes & Noble.com. Four out of five customers are within easy reach of Ingram's warehouses, giving Barnes & Noble a new edge in the speed and cost with which it can reach readers. In other words, Internet retailers can overcome the high cost of distribution if they control their own direct distribution.

In its brief history, the battle between Barnes & Noble and Amazon.com has already provided enough material to launch a thousand business school case studies. The former brought the economics of the category killer to the book industry, creating vast stores with a broad inventory and low prices. The latter brought the economics of the

Internet, creating a virtual store with a theoretically infinite inventory and even lower prices.

Barnes & Noble pioneered the bookstore-as-meeting-place, drawing people with its coffee bars, reading desks and comfortable chairs.

Amazon.com tapped into the new cyber-community, letting its customers post their own reviews on its web site for others to read.

Barnes & Noble is far ahead: it has \$3 billion of revenues and 14 percent of the US book market. But Amazon.com has become a Personal View contender faster even than its own ardent supporters had expected. It is generating sales at an annualized rate of \$600 million and growing at around 30 percent every three months.

Equally important is the fact that Barnes & Noble has failed to beat Amazon.com on its own turf. It opened its own Internet bookstore 18 months ago—nearly two years after its rival. Despite pouring money into Barnes & Noble.com, its online sales are only a tenth of Amazon's. Wall Street has made up its mind where the future lies. It has slapped a market value of \$6 billion on Amazon.com, nearly three times the value of Barnes

& Noble, whose total revenues are five times larger.

The convenience and low cost of shopping on the Internet are undermined, however, by expensive delivery costs. To have the book delivered tomorrow requires a \$10.95 fee. A lower fee brings a delay—not something the impatient American consumer is used to. If the Internet retailing war is turning into a struggle over distribution, then Amazon.com has already shown itself to be a tough competitor.

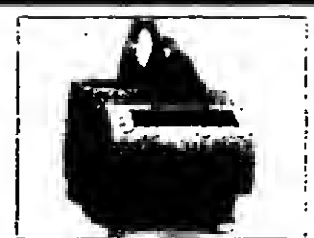
Barnes & Noble's sally into distribution, meanwhile, is only one piece of the jigsaw. There is a broader process of consolidation and vertical integration underway in the book business, one that is being hastened by online commerce. In theory, a book published by Random House could get pride of place on a revamped Barnes & Noble web site: it could also be fed into readers' hands more quickly and cheaply through an in-house distribution system. But before that future arrives, the antitrust experts at the Federal Trade Commission are likely to take a long, hard look.

Financial Times Syndication

News update

A copier/scanner/printer from HP

● Hewlett-Packard have released a printer/copier/scanner unit which meets the market demand for all-in-one systems. It is small enough to sit on an average desk and manages to deliver high quality print-outs. HP's seal of quality and is selling on the international market for under \$700.



The LaserJet 1100A allows you to scan in documents for distribution via email or PC fax, or simply to archive them.

For buyers who don't need all these features now, the LaserJet 1100A includes HP's latest Jet Path technology, which enables users to add the copier and scanner functions at a later date. This cut-down version is available for around \$500.

Linux enjoys growth
● Linux, a freeware version of Unix, is spreading massively across the world and it is attracting attention from the larger players in the industry;

like Microsoft.

In fact, recent reports have pitted Linux against Windows NT; simply because it has proven to be one of the most stable and reliable platforms for network computing available.

Since its launch in 1991, programmers and technical users all over the world have adopted Linux with much enthusiasm.

With 7 million users, it is the fastest growing Unix platform.

Already, Intel and Oracle have thrown their support behind Linux. Intel is currently planning to release its 64-bit new processor with Linux support. As for Oracle, the Oracle Database 8.0 for Linux will ship by the end of this year. Also, Oracle will launch its Linux applications by mid-1999.

Without a doubt, Linux has Microsoft concerned. The whole problem lies in the fact that Linux is free.

Will this prompt Microsoft at some stage to give away Windows NT free?

INTERFACE

BY YED NASSER

Faster Internet needed, more reliable connections

ALTHOUGH THE Internet market and its services have developed tremendously in Jordan over the past couple of years—and despite of speed increases over the past months—most users wish they had faster Internet access, and it's not just because they are too demanding!

Let's face it. The Internet in Jordan isn't fast enough. Even though the technical aspects of the Internet circuits and infrastructures being accessed by Jordanian users are quite developed, there is a serious problem in terms of access speeds, on the one hand, and the stability of the connection on the other.

Of course, each of these problems is the result of quite different factors.

Regarding access speeds, it has much to do with the simultaneous number of users on the service, the speed of your modem, and the type of telephone line you are using.

All in all, today in Amman's main commercial and residential areas, the telephone exchange centers are very advanced and provide the basis for faster Internet. So, what is the problem? Internet speed is a general problem, not restricted to one Internet Service Provider.

As for stability of connections, it seems that other areas in Amman still suffer from the 'pre-historic' nature of the telephone exchanges in use. This means that any digital form of communication being conducted on telephone lines is very likely to be cut off, at any time.

Anyway, getting back to the matter of speed; we are not technical professionals, and it seems that this is a multifaceted problem with several parties involved: The Internet Service Provider, the operators of telephone exchanges, a number of semi-governmental and governmental organizations. To all those people, we cry out: Any comments?

The BSA battles piracy in Amman

ALONG THE lines of METS '98, last week, Mr. Ashok Sharma, the general manager of BSA Middle East was in Amman; speaking on the battle against software piracy in the region. The BSA (Business Software Alliance) is an organization that fights piracy in countries all over the world, and includes in its membership all the major software producers worldwide.

Mr. Sharma commented on the situation in Jordan, saying that the rates of software piracy in Jordan have always been high; and that this situation cannot continue if Jordan's software development industry is to grow. This is especially true regarding the lack of proper implementation of intellectual property rights in Jordan, which weakens the possibilities of Jordan becoming a software development center for the region.

Speaking on piracy in the region, Mr. Sharma explained that Arab Governments are taking serious steps to fight piracy. Countries like the UAE, Egypt, Qatar and Bahrain all have cracked down on piracy. In the UAE, in particular, the levels of piracy have been reduced considerably; by as much as 28%. To comprehend this figure you need to imagine that out of every four pieces of software that used to be copied, one is now a purchased original! Just imagine that happening in Jordan.

In any case, the attention given by the BSA to the market in Jordan is a welcome sign. Software producers can see sales potential in Jordan, and even if it is a relatively small market, millions of dollars are at stake.

Studies show that the region has only reduced its piracy rate by around 6% over the past year. There is still a very long way to go.

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'Voice' could be actress' ticket to fame in US



By Amy Wallace

LOS ANGELES—The film that many people believe is going to make Jane Horrocks a big star is called 'Little Voice', and at first glance, the title seems to fit.

Horrocks, the 5-foot-2 actress best known in America for playing Bubbles on the hit British television comedy 'Absolutely Fabulous', plays a painfully shy girl-nicknamed 'LV' for her tiny whisper-who privately mourns her late father by listening to his classic record collection. When LV begins to sing along, however, impersonating Judy Garland, Billie Holiday, Shirley Bassey and Marilyn Monroe with dead-on accuracy, she comes alive. Suddenly, there's nothing little about her.

The same can be said for Horrocks herself. Her nasal Lancashire accent, which she intentionally nurtures despite being told in drama school that its working-class twang would cost her, gives her a big, saucy sound. Her appetite, spurred by the fact she's four months' pregnant with her second child, is large and veers toward the spicy. So, too, is the breadth of her opinions, which tumble out of her unchecked.

The actress, 34, doesn't believe in marriage ("I see it as a bit like a sheep being branded"). She thinks most productions of Shakespeare—especially British ones—are boring ("Americans on the whole probably do Shakespeare better than we do. They're more relaxed"). And don't get her started on Hollywood.

"A lot of people who come here go off the rails. They're not used to the attention or the mollycoddling that goes on out here," she said recently, dribbling Tabasco on a shrimp salad at Los Angeles' Four Seasons Hotel. When reminded that fellow Brit Gary Oldman has had great success acting in big studio movies, she responds pointedly. "And is Gary Oldman happy?"

Despite her skepticism, when Miramax releases 'Little Voice' on 4 December, many expect Horrocks, who is well-known in Britain, to finally get Hollywood's attention. In the film, her character is stifled by an overbearing mother (Brenda Blethyn) and is so bashful that she can barely

speak to the timid telephone repairman (Ewan MacGregor) who persistently comes calling. But when a small-time agent (Michael Caine) discovers her hidden singing talent, the stage is set for what could become the most talked-about on-screen cluck act since 'The Full Monty'.

Though Horrocks won a 1992 Los Angeles Critics Award for portraying a twitchy, bulimic teen-ager in Mike Leigh's 'Life',

and while she has been asked to audition for directors such as Terry Gilliam (for 'The Fisher King') and Barry Levinson (for 'Toys'), the actress has largely escaped notice on this side of the Atlantic. Mark Herman, the writer-director of 'Little Voice', predicts all that is about to change.

"She's a chameleon, really. The roles she's played are so diverse that people don't really know who she is. They've seen her, but they don't know they've seen her," said Herman, who also wrote and directed the Miramax comedy 'Brassed Off'.

"This is a real starmaking role. The interesting thing is that Jane doesn't necessarily want that. She's got this enormous talent, but she's perfectly happy to sit at home in [London]."

Horrocks has been said to be a master of transformations, and this film, adapted from the smash London play 'The Rise and Fall of Little Voice', makes the most of that skill. Her ability to change from a frail mouse into a strutting diva is nearly as impressive as her impersonations themselves.

But what is most striking is that Horrocks isn't faking. The play was inspired by her real-life talent for mimicry, and the resulting film is

breath-taking just for the sheer athleticism of her vocal cords.

"I was the hane of my parents' lives," Horrocks jokes, recalling how as a child she first discovered that she could get laughs by imitating famous voices. Bassey, British singer Cilla Black and Julie Andrews were early favorites.

While at drama school, she picked up more voices—Edith Piaf and Marlene Dietrich.

For example, But performing them was merely an amusement, not part of her theatrical work.

"I didn't actually use the impersonations, apart from doing them as a party piece, for probably eight years," she said. "When [playwright] Jim Cartwright said he would write a play around them, I said, 'That would be quite nice.' But secretly I hoped he never would. The thought of doing it professionally really scared me."

Horrocks' worst fear, that on opening night of 'Rise and Fall' she'd open her mouth and nothing would come out, loomed as she rehearsed the play with director Sam Mendes.

But by the end of the play's eight-month run at the Royal National Theatre, Horrocks had so mastered the mannerisms and inflections of each of the tragic singers that someone saw fit to tack a respectful title above the name on her dressing room door: Dame.

After hundreds of performances on the stage, you might think an actress could do the film blind-folded. But in fact, Horrocks spent two months with a vocal coach before the cameras rolled.

"I thought a film demanded quite a bit more accuracy," said Horrocks.

who doesn't 'do' a generalized Garland, but actually replicates particular recorded performances. Her preparation technique? Carrying a tape recorder around with her, playing one phrase at a time and parroting it back.

Herman, the director, remembers Horrocks resembled a woman possessed. "Coming across to the set she'd have this tape recorder. And right up to action she'd be playing it back. She would go to levels that I didn't understand," he admitted. "Things that sounded perfectly fine Judy Garland to me and presumably to 99 percent of the viewing audience were unacceptable to Jane. She's an extraordinary perfectionist. And it pays off."

Caine has described seeing Horrocks perform as 'Little Voice' this way: "I had tears in my eyes. It's the first time I've actually watched a star being born." But Horrocks, who lives with her 'chap' (writer Nick Viviani) and their son Dylan in the London suburb of Twickenham, is visibly reluctant about following that star to Los Angeles.

Horrocks says she'd love to work with American directors she admires, such as Woody Allen and Robert Altman, but she's wary of the way some British actors have been 'picked up' by Hollywood and put in films they're not right for. "And she thinks it's often ludicrous when Brits in American movies speak with their own accents, and vice versa."

"When you get a very British sound coming out, surrounded by Americans, it's weird," she says decidedly. "Barry Levinson got me to read for the character that I think Robin Wright played in 'Toys'. It was sort of in the outskirts of America and I read it in an American accent. He said, 'No, do it in your own voice.' She smiles, remembering her audacity.

"I said, 'Well, why? Why would a girl from Lancashire be here? I don't believe it. Sorry,' she recalls. "I went back home and my friends said, 'You said that to Barry Levinson?' I said, 'Well, he's not God. And I was speaking the truth.' I just would have stuck out like a sore thumb."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

After hundreds of performances on the stage, you might think an actress could do the film blind-folded. But in fact, Horrocks spent two months with a vocal coach before the cameras rolled.

Abed Kattan

The multi-talented Arab artist

By Rana Haddad
Special to the Star

MEETING ABED KATTAN, the singer and actor at METS' 98 exhibition was a bit unusual but it was the artist's way of reaching out to his public. Kattan reserved a small corner at the exhibition to show his CD's and play some of his music to the coming patrons. "I believe that an artist should go out to meet his public and not wait for his public to come to him," says Abed Kattan.

Born and raised in Jerusalem, Kattan moved to Zurich, Switzerland several years ago. He went as a student to major in Economics and chose to stay to pursue a career as a controller in a Swiss Company.

Kattan is an artist with a beautiful voice that is deep and soft at the same time. At the age of nine, Abed Kattan, started to sing and act during school events. He acted in several plays in Jerusalem and was described by the local press at the time as "someone who makes you cry while laughing."

In Jerusalem, Kattan was awarded several prizes. He received



"Zahrat Al Madain" prize for singing and an acting prize during the Palestinian week of Arts and Culture.

Kattan was the first Arab artist to sing the Swiss Folklore music. This

was even before he learnt the language of the country.

In 1991 he chose to return to his roots, by playing Arabic music. His first release was "Ya Alhi Malak" which was followed by "Sibi Alhi B'halu" and "Ba'ad Al Asifa" in 1993.

In 1995, Abed Kattan held his first concert in Amman, and in 1998, he produced "Sayidaty" in addition to five other video clips.

In composing his Albums, Kattan worked with a number of famous writers and poets as Fawda Tukan, Nizar Qabani, Farouk Gouda and others. He was the first Arab artist to have a site on the worldwideweb.

The multi-talented artist who has a genuine interest in children has recently released a special album of children songs. "Keep up the hard work and you will achieve your goal," is what Kattan keeps telling young generations.

Believing that an artist is the mirror that reflects his country's image abroad, Kattan works hard to fulfill this role in the best way he knows.

MISS COLOMBIA '98



A beauty queen from Colombia's Atlantico province, Maria Nella Maal Paccini, was crowned Miss Colombia, 15 November in Cartagena. Twenty-three young women from across the country were competing this weekend for the prized title of Miss Colombia, a beauty pageant that each year deflects Colombian's attention from the country's bitter civil conflict and provides them with a touch of glamor.

Reuters



Actress Drew Barrymore, who starred in the comedy film 'Home Fries', will appear in the film on 16 November at the stars Lake, New York.



Payrouz in Tunisia

Well-known Lebanese singer Payrouz charmed audiences in Tunisia. More than 10,000 people came out to see her perform traditional and modern favorites like 'Zahrat Al Madain' and 'Ya Alhi Malak'. The first concert was given in the Tunisian capital for two hours. Proceeds from the concert will be donated to a fund to help poor children in Lebanon. Payrouz will also perform in Beirut and Abidjan. Ben Ali awarded her a decoration for her contribution to the arts.